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CHURCH ENGLISH HISTORY

J. M. STONE

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THE CHURCH IN ENGLISH
HISTORY.

THE CHURCH IN ENGLISH HISTORY

A MANUAL FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Being an Outline of the most Important Events,
from the Introduction of Christianity to
Catholic Emancipation in 1829

BY

J. M. STONE

AUTHOR OF "MARY THE FIRST, QUEEN OF ENGLAND"; "REFORMATION
AND RENAISSANCE"; "STUDIES FROM COURT AND CLOISTER," ETC.

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To
SYBIL,
LADY BEDINGFELD
AND HER CHILDREN
THIS MANUAL IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

PREFACE

THIS work, which is intended as a manual for teachers and history students in secondary and higher grade schools, does not pretend to be a complete or exhaustive study of the influence of the Church on English history. Such a book, by the very depth and breadth of the subject, and by the time necessary for its proper digestion, would be totally useless for schools, where the utmost that can be done in the domain of history is to give the student a correct outline of leading events, their causes and effects, and a comprehensive survey from a bird's-eye point of view. But outlines and map-like views are apt to be tedious and uninteresting, whereas to create an interest in the subject taught is a most essential part of instruction, and no instruction that is good for anything is based on any other foundation. It is hoped, therefore, that slight as this sketch necessarily is it will not be wholly wanting in attractiveness, and that those whom it leads to the desire for a more complete study of the subject will be helped thereto by the works referred to in the foot notes, which supply an ample bibliography.

J. M. STONE.

April 15th, 1907.

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The Church in English History

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST COMING OF THE FAITH

WHEN Julius Cæsar first invaded Britain, fifty-five years before the birth of our Lord, he described the inhabitants of the island as savages. But as the Romans had then reached a high degree of civilisation, and looked upon all other nations as outer barbarians, they cannot be trusted implicitly in their accounts of the peoples and tribes whom they conquered.

Some of the tribes inhabiting Britain were apparently more advanced than others. Those living in the extreme south-western part certainly understood how to extract the copper from the mines which abounded there, and the men of the south and south-east were skilled warriors, and presented a formidable appearance when drawn up in battle array, their chariots furnished with sharp scythes for mowing down their enemies. The Britons do not appear to have been exceptionally fierce, although their priests, the Druids, sacrificed human victims to the Supreme Being, whom they worshipped under various attributes. Their altars were huge blocks of stone set up in groves, in the midst of the dense forests, which covered the greater part of the island. They lived in huts made of the interlaced branches of trees, daubed over with clay, which hardened in the heat of the sun.

By degrees the Romans not only conquered, but to a certain extent civilised, the Britons, taught them

to make roads and bridges, founded cities and built houses of brick and stone. Traces of the Roman occupation of Britain may also still be seen in the ruins of very beautiful villas, tessellated pavements and baths in many parts of England.

While these things were going on in this far western island, our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Palestine. Very soon after His death, resurrection and ascension, the religion which He founded was brought to Rome, and Rome became the See of Peter, Prince of the Apostles and Head of the Church on earth. We have no very clear or reliable account of how the Christian faith first came to our islands. Our earliest native historian, St Gildas, a British monk, who was born about six hundred years after Christ, says that one of the Apostles came to Britain and converted the people. According to another tradition, St Paul extended his travels to these parts, and preached the Gospel in Britain, while yet another story relates that St Peter himself took refuge here when the Jews were banished from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. But the most persistent of these legends, and one that was seriously adopted by William of Malmesbury, a writer who lived in the twelfth century, affirms that the Apostle St Philip, having preached the faith to the Gauls, sent his friend, St Joseph of Arimathea, with eleven companions to convert the Britons. William of Malmesbury here trusts to the authority of Freulf, an historian and statesman who lived in the time of Charlemagne. The Gallic tradition is borne out by that of the natives themselves, who declared that St Joseph and his companions, although they failed to convert the king of western Britain, obtained from him a grant of land at "Glastonia" or "Avalon," where they built a church of wicker-work in honour of the Mother of God.¹ When St Joseph struck his

¹ "*Ecclesiæ Glastoniæ non fecerunt aliorum hominum manus, sed ipsi discipuli Christi eam ædificaverunt*"—the hands of other

staff into the earth, there sprang up the famous thorn-tree, which still blossoms twice in the year—once at Christmas. The identical story of this coming of the faith is contained in the annals of the church of Glastonbury, which the Protestant Archbishop Usher saw in the seventeenth century.¹

All this may, however, in spite of its prettiness, be but the baseless fabric of a dream. What we know for certain is that many people in Rome became Christians through the preaching of St Peter and St Paul. One of these converts was Bran, afterwards called the Blessed, father of the British leader Caratacos, who passed seven years in Rome as a hostage for his son. When he returned to Britain he converted many of his fellow-tribesmen among the Kymri or Welsh, and his memory survives in the name of a place in Glamorganshire—Trevran (Tref Bran), the abode of Bran. Near it is Llanilid or St Ilid, which was the name of one of Bran's missionaries.

Later on we have the authority of the venerable Bede, who, we know, was very careful in ascertaining the truth, and who died in the year 735. He mentions a British church as being in existence between the years 177 and 181, when Eleutherius was Pope.² A British king or chieftain, named Lucius (in Kymri phrase, Lleirwg), a descendant of Bran, honoured alike by Roman and Briton, sent messengers to Rome, begging the Pontiff to admit him into the fold of Christ, and to send missionaries to instruct his people in the true faith. The request was gladly granted, Lucius was baptised, and Christianity spread without opposition. Lucius built a church at Llandaff. This account is corroborated by writers of the end of the second century, such

men made not the church at Glastonbury, but the disciples of Christ themselves erected it. "Gest. Regum," c. l., s. 19.

¹ Usher, *Brit. Eccl. Antiq.*, p. 9, 1687.

² Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, Book I., ch. iv.

as Tertullian and Origen, who mention Britain as a country where Catholicism had already taken root, and who speak of the Christian religion as extending from India to Britain.

Thus we see that however early Christianity gained a footing in our islands, a distinctly Roman origin has always been claimed for it. Whether St Peter himself or St Paul landed on our shores, whether Christians among the invading hosts spread the faith among the Britons, whether Bran the Blessed largely evangelised the Welsh tribes, or whether it was Lucius who first appealed to the Pope for missionaries, it is clear that the Britons received the Water of Life from its only true source, and that they were in communion with the Catholic Church wherever it existed in the world.

The historian Fuller justly says of Britain: "We see that the light shined there at a very early period, but we see not who kindled it."

For more than a hundred years after the period assigned for the conversion of Lucius, we hear only that the faith was kept "in quiet peace, inviolate and entire."¹ Then came the outbreak of persecution under the Roman emperor Diocletian, at the beginning of the fourth century, which was pursued with great violence even in the colonies of the Roman empire.

The Christians of Britain were hunted into caverns and trackless forests, where they died of starvation, or if they fell into the hands of the pagans, they had to choose between renouncing their religion and dying for it. Great numbers suffered death for the sake of Christ, but the names of only three of the martyrs are known to history, these are Julian and Aaron, dwellers of Caerleon-upon-Usk in Monmouthshire, and Alban, who on account of his generosity, courage and sufferings, has been honoured with the title of proto-martyr of Britain. St Alban was a Roman soldier, and he is generally represented in armour. During this bloody persecution he was at Verulam, a city and camp close

¹ Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, Book I., ch. iv.

to the site of the present town of St Albans. While yet a pagan, he had compassionately given shelter to a Christian priest, Amphibalus, who was flying from his persecutors. Alban's charity was rewarded by the gift of faith. Seeing that the priest was constantly at his prayers, the Roman soldier became curious to know the source of so much piety. He felt drawn to ask him for information, and as a result of the instruction which he received, he expressed the desire to be received into the Catholic Church, and was accordingly baptised.

But in the meanwhile the retreat of the fugitive had been discovered, and a band of soldiers was sent to arrest him. The pursuers were already at the door, when Alban, wrapping himself in the mantle usually worn by the priest, was taken for Amphibalus, and led before the judge. He was ordered to sacrifice to the gods, but refused, and boldly confessed himself a Christian. The judge then commanded him to be scourged, but as Alban's constancy remained unshaken, the martyr was led to instant execution. This took place in the year 305.

Outside the walls of the old city, now village, of Verulam the ground rises, and on a pleasant knoll stands a stately abbey church. It was built in the twelfth century, chiefly of bricks taken from the old Roman city, over the spot where St Alban sealed his newly found faith with his blood. But Catholic England did not wait so long before raising a monument to her beloved proto-martyr, and the present building was raised on the ruins of an older church and monastery, founded in 793, which became celebrated as the head of the Benedictine communities in England, and even this church had succeeded another, which from the time when the persecution ceased was erected over the relics of St Alban. The magnificent twelfth century shrine may still be seen. It was broken up in the sixteenth century, but has been cleverly pieced together again.

The road to the place of execution was not long, but it was eventful. As the procession wound along and crossed the bridge over the River Ver a strange thing happened. A soldier, named Heraclius, who had been appointed to behead the martyr, and who probably marched beside him, was suddenly illumined by the light of faith, refused to perform the task assigned to him, and declared himself a Christian. Instead of one victim that day two martyrs glorified God, and Heraclius was baptised in his own blood.

Amphibalus, who was soon afterwards arrested, suffered the penalty of his faith. But the horror produced by these butcheries had the effect of stopping the persecution, and by degrees peace was restored to the Church by the elevation of Constantine to the imperial purple in the year 313.

CHAPTER II

THE BRITISH CHURCH IN COMMUNION WITH ROME

THE unity of the Church is the great dominant note of Christianity in the early ages. Our Lord had prayed for the first Pope and the first episcopate "that they all" might be "*one*," and St Paul, in writing of the Christian Church of his day, describes it as having "one faith." There is ample proof that this unity remained unbroken, and that as the Gentiles received the faith of Christ they were gathered into the one true fold, the chief shepherd of which was the Roman Pontiff, the successor of the Apostle St Peter, to whom our Lord said, "Feed My sheep. Feed My lambs."

But before this He had also told St Peter that He was the Rock on which His Church should be founded, adding, "and to thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed in Heaven."

As St Peter could only in the nature of things live but a few years on earth, there would have been little use in a headship and pastoral office that should be limited to his natural lifetime, whereas the Church of which he was to be the foundation was to endure to the end of the world. Therefore when our Lord spoke to St Peter, He spoke not to him only, but to him in his successors throughout the ages. This was so well understood in mediæval times, that people used commonly to speak of the actual occupant of St Peter's Chair as "the Apostle Pope," and as "Peter."

Under the Jewish dispensation Jerusalem was the city of God, and the eyes of His people were always turned towards it, and towards the Temple which contained the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant. Under the Christian dispensation it was to Rome that men looked for guidance in the law and Gospel of Christ. For St Peter, first Bishop of the Christian Church, fixed his See at Rome, and all his successors have been Bishops of Rome.

The British Church was not only recognised as an integral part of the Universal Church, but was particularly loyal to the faith and to the successor of St Peter. In the fourth century St Hilary of Poitiers congratulated the bishops of Briton on their freedom from all taint of heresy, at a time when the Arian heresy, which denied the divine nature of Christ, was ravaging the Eastern Church, and the Donatists were filling all Africa with confusion. St Chrysostom observed that in Britain, as in other parts, men might be heard discussing points of Scripture with differing voices, but not with differing belief. A little later St Jerome remarked that Britain worshipped the same Christ, and observed the same rule of faith as other nations. The presence of British bishops at the Council of Arles in Gaul, in the year 314, and the fact that they were invited by Pope Silvester to take part in the proceedings, are proofs that he recognised them as orthodox members of the episcopate. These were: The Bishops of York, London, and Caerleon-on-Usk.

Councils may be described as of two kinds—provincial, and general or œcumenical.

A provincial council, such as that at Arles, was an assembly of bishops in communion with Rome, met to consider ecclesiastical matters of local importance. Sometimes the Pope would be represented by a legate, who presided, and afterwards made known his decision.

A general or œcumenical council is a meeting of all the bishops of the Catholic Church for the purpose

of discussing matters which concern the whole Church, such as the definition of an article of faith, or the devising of plans for the reform of abuses. The Pope presides as head of the council, and the decree which he pronounces after the deliberations, addressed to the whole Church *ex cathedra*, that is, from the chair of the Apostle, is binding on all the faithful.

The first general council of the Catholic Church was called to denounce the heresy of Arius, and was held at Nicæa in Asia Minor in 325. At this council British bishops were also present, and together with the other bishops signed a letter to the Pope, begging him to confirm by his authority the decrees which they had drawn up.

Again, British bishops formed part of the Council of Sardica¹ in Bulgaria in 347, and that of Rimini in 359. Thus there can be no doubt but that the British Church was in full communion with Rome in the fourth century. When these bishops returned to their sees they were careful to instruct their flocks in all things appertaining to Catholic unity. The Pope, too, was solicitous for the spiritual welfare of these remote islanders, and from time to time sent missionaries not only to extend the limits of the Church by the conversion of tribes that were still pagan, but also to maintain strict uniformity of faith and practice among those who were already Catholics. Sometimes these missionaries were natives of Britain, who had been sent abroad for their education, and had remained to study for the priesthood. One of them, Ninian, a Northumbrian youth of noble family, became the apostle of the Lowland Picts, a rough rude race, which owed its conversion to his missionary zeal. Palladius was another papal emissary, who, if his efforts to convert the Irish were unsuccessful,

¹ Their presence is mentioned by St Athanasius, the great opponent of Arianism, which was the principal cause of the meeting of the Council, *Opera S. Ath.*, t. i. contra Ar. p. 123. Paris, 1698.

turned his attention to the natives of Cornwall, and ended his life among them. St Patrick, who became the apostle of the Irish, seems to have been of mixed British and Roman parentage. His birthplace, long a point of controversy, was most probably Kilpatrick, near Dumbarton. He was twice captured by pirates, and taken to Ireland, where as a youth he endured a long period of servitude. During this time he conceived a great longing to win the Irish to the true faith. Later, he spent some time on the continent, and visited St Martin of Tours, who was also the friend of St Ninian. At last he got to Rome; and was entrusted by Pope Celestine with the Irish mission. Thus when Palladius withdrew from Ireland St Patrick was ready to take his place. The sanctity and austerity of his life, his wonderful charity and the innumerable miracles which he worked, overcame all opposition, and the gospel spread rapidly throughout the island. St Patrick is said to have made three journeys to Rome: the first time to receive his mission, the second to report the result of his labours, and the third to be invested with the pallium, a stole of white sheep's wool, emblematic of the pastoral charge of an archbishop over his flock and the badge of jurisdiction. With the pallium he received the title of Apostolic Legate for the see of Armagh. He died at Down in 464.

Other missionaries to Britain in the fifth century were St Kieran, the apostle of Cornwall, sent by Pope Damasus, and St Cadoc, the son of a Welsh prince, who made seven pilgrimages to Rome and two to Jerusalem. He was founder and abbot of the celebrated monastery of Llancarven.

Early in the fifth century the Roman legions were recalled to Italy. The British tribes were by this time nearly all christianised. They possessed a regularly constituted hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons, spread all over the island. But although they had happily escaped the contagion of the

Arian heresy, they suffered very considerably from Pelagianism. This heresy was the invention of a Celt, named Pelagius, who, like so many of his fellow-countrymen, travelled to Rome in his youth, and being a man of considerable talent and originality, made brilliant studies, and soon began to be talked about. He grew proud of his fame, and wandered away into false doctrines. He denied that there was any such thing as original sin, and declared that men could attain salvation without the help of God's grace. A good many of his disciples, Britons like himself, were led away into error, and when they returned home, they spread his pernicious teaching throughout the land. The clergy, not knowing how to counteract so insidious and flattering an influence, sent to the bishops assembled in synod at Troyes in Gaul for learned men versed in theology to come over and preach the true doctrine concerning original sin. St Celestine was Pope at that time (he occupied the Chair of Peter from 432 to 440), and in answer to an appeal from Palladius, he directed St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, to proceed to Britain, and guide the British back to the true faith.¹ Germanus took with him Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, and they, both by their preaching and teaching, completely succeeded in driving out the heresy. A great meeting was held at Verulam, where, after venerating the relics of St Alban, the Gallic Bishops required the Pelagians to defend their doctrines. The venerable Bede tells us that in this assembly was on the one side divine faith, on the other human presumption; on the one side piety, on the other pride. When the people

¹ A contemporary writer, St Prosper, secretary to the Pope, declares that "at the suggestion of the Deacon Palladius, Pope Celestine sent German, the Bishop of Auxerre, as his legate, in order that after having confuted the heretics he may direct the Britons aright in the Catholic faith. . . . Thus Celestine made the barbarian island (Ireland) Christian, while he endeavoured to preserve the Roman island Catholic." *Works of St Prosper*, p. 744, Paris, 1711.

had heard all that the Pelagians had to say, and had in turn listened to the answers of the missionaries, they unanimously returned to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Thus we see that not only did the British Church receive the faith from Rome, but that when the Britons fell into error, they acknowledged the right of the Pope to correct them.

CHAPTER III

THE PAPAL MISSION TO THE ENGLISH (597)

THE work of St Germanus in Britain was by no means ended when he had restored the people to the full knowledge and practice of the true faith. Since the Romans had left them defenceless and without a leader, they had been the easy prey of the northern Picts, whose marauding expeditions became more and more audacious, and threatened to extend to the midland and southern parts of the country. Germanus consented to lead the Britons against the Picts, and gained the wondrous victory called from its battle cry the Alleluia victory.

Tranquillity being restored, the Gallic bishops prepared to return home after a further visit to the tomb of St Alban, where Germanus deposited a small box of relics which he had brought with him from Gaul, taking in exchange a handful of dust, still red with the martyr's blood, in order to place it in a new church at Auxerre that was to be dedicated to St Alban.

Some years later St Germanus was again sent to Britain, a fresh outbreak of Pelagianism having occurred. This time he was accompanied by Severus, Bishop of Troyes, and the two missionaries not only reclaimed those who had relapsed into heresy, but expelled the authors of the new trouble from the island. Traces of this second mission and of the veneration which Germanus inspired in the British may be seen to this day in the ruins of St German's Cathedral in the Isle of Man, in those of the church

of St Geran in Cornwall, and in some remains of old monasteries in Wales.

The Venerable Bede tells us that for a long time after this the faith was kept pure in Britain, and Giraldus Cambrensis, who wrote in the twelfth century, says that Pelagianism was the only heresy which ever afflicted the British Church. But a period of terrible temporal distress set in when Teuton invaders from the shores of the Elbe, the Weser and the Rhine began to harass the coasts, pillaging and destroying wherever they effected a landing, and sweeping the country bare with fire and sword. It was during this dreadful time of darkness, when Britain was the prey of these pagan and barbarian hordes, that tradition places the great King Arthur, the pattern and flower of chivalry, who held his Table Round at Camelot, and who lies buried beside his erring queen, Guinevere, at Glastonbury, in the "island valley of Avalon."

The most formidable of the invading chieftains was Hengist, whose aid in a moment of despair the Britons had solicited to repulse the renewed attacks of the Picts and the incursions of the Scots, the original inhabitants of Ireland, who had colonised in the north of Britain. Hengist consented to help them, but when with his bands of mercenaries he had driven the marauders back to the north of the wall of Antoninus, he turned his arms against those who had called him in, and falling upon the unfortunate Britons, he completely routed them, and established himself in that part of the country now called Kent. Other chieftains to the number of seven followed the example of Hengist, parcelled the land between them, and thus were founded the eight Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, stretching from sea to sea, and from the northern wall built by the Romans to the narrow strip of water in the south that divided Britain from Gaul.

Wherever these barbarians passed, civilisation dis-

appeared. They were naturally fierce, but the stubborn resistance of the Britons made them merciless. Worshippers of Thor and Woden, they overturned the Christian altars, and deluged the land with blood. Inch by inch, leaving ruin, death and blackened heaps behind them, they swept the Christian population into the hilly parts of Wales and Cornwall, or on to the rocky islands of the north. Those who remained behind became the slaves of the conquerors. Some intrepid confessors of the faith escaped to Armorica in open boats, and formed a settlement of fervent Christians, whose descendants still exist in the Brittany of to-day.

All the efforts of the pagans to extinguish the light of the Gospel proved unavailing. Christ was displaced but not exterminated, and the British Church lived on and flourished in Wales, beyond the borders of which the invaders did not penetrate. To this period belong the great names of St David of Menevia, St Gildas, St Kentigern, St Columba, St Beuno, St Winefrid, St Asaph, and others scarcely less illustrious.

But while those who had fled beyond the sea spared no pains to spread the knowledge of Christianity, the British Christians made no attempt to share their gift of faith with their conquerors, who, becoming by degrees less ferocious as they abandoned a nomadic for a settled life, showed signs of an aptitude for civilisation and a teachableness which they afterwards amply vindicated. The Britons held themselves completely aloof, avoiding contact with them in every way, perhaps from fear of contamination by the impure rites of Woden as well as from hatred of the invader. Bede finds no excuse for this conduct, but says: "To other acts of unspeakable wickedness they added this, that they would never commit the word of faith by preaching to the race of Saxons and Angles that dwelt with them in Britain."¹

¹ Bede.

Whatever its motive, the British Church certainly did nothing to lift the veil of darkness that hung over the souls of the English, and their ultimate conversion to Christianity was the direct act of Rome.

The story is well known how the monk Gregory, dearly beloved of the Roman people, in passing through the Forum one day saw some golden-haired boys exposed for sale as slaves. Struck with their innocent appearance, he asked from what country they came. "From Britain," replied the slave-masters. "Are they Christians?" inquired Gregory, and on being told that they were pagans, he exclaimed, "Alas that forms and faces so fair should be in the power of the prince of darkness!" On being told that they were Angles, he said, "Assuredly not Angles but angels, and it were meet that they should be fellow-heirs with angels in heaven." The traders further added that they were from the province of Deira, whereupon the monk returned that the name was of good omen, for he added, "*De irâ eruti sunt*—they are delivered from the wrath of God." Hearing that the name of their king was Ælla, Gregory seized on the name joyfully. "Alleluia shall be sung there," he cried, and went on his way, musing as to the means of bringing this to pass. He did not forget the episode or the angel faces, and although his immediate efforts for the conversion of the English failed, in after years when he was Pope something happened that gave him the opportunity he sought.

Ethelbert, King of Kent, married Bercta, the Christian daughter of the Frankish king of Paris, Charibert, and allowed her to practise her religion. A bishop named Liudhard accompanied her to England as her chaplain. The descendants of Hengist, settled in Kent, had gradually cultivated the arts of peace, and, possessing a certain amount of civilisation, were a hundred years after the Anglo-Saxon conquest the best prepared of all their fellow-

countrymen to receive the faith. St Gregory seems to have been well informed of these facts when he sent Augustine, the abbot of a Benedictine monastery on the Coelian Hill, in Rome, with a number of other monks, to offer the truths of Christianity to Ethelbert and his people.

On their way through Gaul, terrible tales were told them of the barbarous country for which they were bound, and of the savage character of the English, so that the hearts of the weakest of the little band quailed. They hesitated to proceed further on their journey to a people who would probably show themselves hostile, and whose language they could not speak, and they therefore entreated St Augustine to return, and represent to the Pope the difficulties of the mission, which they now saw for the first time. Augustine accordingly laid their petition at the Pope's feet, but Gregory was not to be foiled in his apostolic and almost life-long desire for the salvation of the English, and he accordingly sent him back to his companions with the following letter:—

“Gregory, the servant of God's servants to the servants of our Lord—Since it were better not to begin what is good than to let our thoughts turn away from the good which we have begun, you must, my most beloved children, with the utmost zeal complete the good work which, with the help of the Lord, you have begun. Therefore, let neither the toil of the journey nor the tongues of censorious men deter you, but with all earnestness and all fervour bring to completion what God has given you to begin, knowing that great labour is followed by the greater glory of everlasting reward. When Augustine, your chief, whom we make your abbot too, has rejoined you, obey him humbly in everything, knowing that whatever you fulfil in obedience to his word will be in every way profitable to your souls. May Almighty God protect you by His grace, and give me to see the fruit of your labour in our eternal country; since, if I cannot also labour with you, I shall be united with you in the joy of reward, because I wish indeed to labour. May God keep you, my most beloved children.”

Without further delay, and sped on their way by

the influential friends to whom the holy Pope had recommended them in Gaul, the company of missionaries, their numbers now increased to about forty, landed at Ebbsfleet, in the Isle of Thanet, in the spring of the year 597.

St Augustine at once despatched a messenger to the Saxon king, announcing that "strangers from Rome had come" to open to him and to his people the gates of eternal life. Ethelbert at once consented to receive the missionaries, but cautiously stipulated that the meeting should take place in the open air, where, if they employed incantations, these would be less likely to take effect than between walls. The monks therefore proceeded to the place appointed by the king for the interview, walking with imposing ceremony in procession, chanting litanies and praying for the conversion of the English. A silver cross and a banner with a painting of the world's Redeemer were borne before them. Ethelbert received them kindly, gave them liberty to expound their religion to his people, and assured them of his protection as long as they should remain in his territory. A year later he was baptised, together with ten thousand men of Kent, a circumstance which St Gregory announced with words of fervent joy in a letter to the Patriarch of Alexandria.

But St Augustine was not yet a bishop, and it became necessary with the increasing number of converts to establish a hierarchy in England. The Pope, therefore, wishing this to be accomplished as speedily as possible, and with as short an absence from the scene of his labours as might be, ordered him to be consecrated archbishop of the English by Vergilius, papal vicar and Bishop of Arles in France. On his return to England after his consecration, Augustine received from Ethelbert the gift of a palace at Canterbury, with permission to build a church there, and a grant of land for the maintenance of those who were to serve it. Hitherto they

had worshipped in a venerable little church close by Canterbury, built by the Britons, and dedicated to St Martin of Tours. This church, one of the oldest Christian monuments in England, is still standing. It had been restored by Queen Bercta and given to Bishop Liudhard, but on the arrival of the missionaries it was transferred to them. Now, moreover, St Augustine restored and enlarged another ancient church, built in the time of the Roman occupation, but since desecrated. He dedicated it to "the holy Saviour Jesus Christ." On this spot stands the present fabric of Canterbury Cathedral, the rebuilding of which was begun in the eleventh century.

CHAPTER IV

ST AUGUSTINE, FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
(604)—ST LAWRENCE, SECOND ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY (619)

SOON after his consecration as archbishop, St Augustine sent to beg St Gregory for more men and books to aid him in his apostolic mission. He had received the pallium in token of his archiepiscopal jurisdiction, and when he inquired how far this jurisdiction extended, the Pope replied: "Over all the bishops of Britain, in order that the unlearned may be taught, the weak strengthened, the perverse corrected." He added that with the bishops of Gaul he must not interfere, as no authority was given to him over them, Augustine having asked whether the liturgical differences existing between the British and the Gallic churches were to be tolerated. He gave him many instructions as to the government of the Church in England, and the manner in which he was to deal with converts. Together with these instructions were sent four new missionaries—monks from St Augustine's own monastery on the Cœlian Hill. These were Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus and Rufinianus, who all did glorious work in England. They brought with them splendid gifts from the Pope, relics of the martyrs, sacred vessels for the altar, and illuminated manuscripts of the Bible, some of which exist in our great national collections to this day.

Thus reinforced, Augustine was now able, aided by the munificence of King Ethelbert, to establish two other sees—those of London and Rochester.

The city of London was already famous, and even in the time of the Roman occupation it had been the chief centre of commerce in the island. But it had never been Christianised, until Seberct, king of the East Saxons whose capital it was, was converted by Mellitus, one of the four new missionaries. Seberct invited Mellitus to reside there, and received baptism at his hands. Mellitus was consecrated Bishop of London, and Seberct helped him to build his cathedral, which they dedicated to St Paul, Seberct having already founded the Abbey of Westminster in honour of St Peter, Prince of the Apostles. This king's tomb may yet be seen in the Abbey. He was buried on the south side of the high altar, under a low arch beneath the sedilia.

Unhappily, the see of London fell to pieces after the death of Seberct, and all that had been done for the establishment of Christian worship became a prey to heathendom. The three sons of Seberct, who inherited the East Saxon kingdom, had never altogether renounced paganism, and on their father's death they openly returned to it, and encouraged the people to do the same. One day they burst into the church while Mellitus was giving holy Communion, and demanded to have some of the white bread which he used to give their father. Mellitus replied that if they were willing to be washed in the laver of salvation in which their father was washed, they too might partake of that holy Bread whereof he used to partake, but that if they despised the laver of life, they could not receive the Bread of Life. But they answered, "We will not enter into that laver, for we know not what need we have of it, yet will we eat of that Bread."¹

The consequence of the Bishop's reiterated refusal was banishment, and the total ruin of the new mission. Mellitus went back to Kent, but there also the brethren had fallen on evil days, and for a season he was obliged to retire to Gaul.

¹ Bede, Book II., ch. v.

Rochester was in its early history scarcely more fortunate than the see of London. Ethelbert, king of Kent, built a church there, endowed it, and dedicated it to St Andrew, in gratitude to St Andrew's monastery on the Cœlian Hill, which had given the faith of Christ to the English; St Justus was its first bishop.

In the meanwhile, St Augustine having received from the Pope jurisdiction over the whole Church in these parts, was earnestly desirous of bringing the Welsh bishops, the actual representatives of the early British Church, into conformity with the practices of the Roman Church in matters of discipline, and to reconcile them to their Anglo-Saxon conquerors. In doctrine they had in nowise departed from the belief of the universal Church; they acknowledged the supremacy of the See of Rome, otherwise St Augustine would not have invited them to co-operate with him in his labours, but they obstinately declined to acknowledge the apostle of the English as their own archbishop, and they clung tenaciously to the customs that had prevailed in the western Church at the time when, by the invasion of the northern tribes, they were pushed out into the wilderness and cut off from intercourse with the rest of Christendom by the intervening pagan world.

These customs were in themselves small matters, but it was desirable that there should be one rule of observance everywhere, and much inconvenience was caused, for instance, by one part of the Church celebrating Easter at one time, another at another. This was the principal divergence, but the Celtic Catholics also observed a ritual of their own in the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, and this ritual it was necessary to bring into conformity with that of Rome. The shape of the tonsure was another point of diversity.

St Augustine met the Welsh bishops in conference, but no good was effected. They not only held stubbornly to their old customs, but showed so

intense a hatred of the conquering race that had in past ages proved disastrous to them and the Christian religion, that they absolutely refused to join the archbishop in his efforts to convert the English. In this conduct they certainly displayed an unchristian spirit, as well as disobedience to St Gregory's ordinance in investing the Archbishop of Canterbury with extraordinary powers. But from disobeying a command to a denial of the right to issue commands is a far cry, and it would be therefore absurd to argue that the British Church at this period refused to admit the authority of the Pope. As well might it be said that a child in committing an act of disobedience against his father disputes the right of that father to issue commands.

St Augustine governed the Church in England for about seven years. He died in 604, and was buried in the abbey church of St Peter and St Paul, near Canterbury, which he had founded.

St Lawrence, his successor in the archiepiscopal see, was one of his earliest companions in the mission. Shortly before his death St Augustine had consecrated him as his successor, and the second Archbishop of Canterbury devoted himself as zealously as the first to carrying on the great work that had been begun.

But King Ethelbert was now also dead, and his son Eadbald, although outwardly a Christian, was a scandal to the converts by reason of his disordered life. When the missionaries remonstrated with him for his connection with his young and beautiful step-mother, Ethelbert's widow, he preferred rather to abjure Christianity than to do violence to his unlawful passion. Unhappily the people were demoralised by his example, and many apostatised. St Lawrence held a council with Mellitus, the exiled Bishop of London, and Justus, Bishop of Rochester, and they decided that it would be better to withdraw for a season to a place where they could serve God in peace than to remain among people who had actively re-

jected the Gospel, and had basely returned to their pagan uncleanness. Mellitus and Justus went over to Gaul, and Lawrence was preparing to follow them, when during the night before his intended departure he had a vision. After praying and weeping for hours in the church of St Peter and St Paul, he lay down to take some rest. Scarcely had he closed his eyes when the apostle Peter appeared to him, reproached him for his intention to forsake the flock committed to him, and scourged him severely in his displeasure. In the morning St Lawrence hastened to the king, and taking off his garments, showed the marks of the castigation he had received. Eadbald asked who had dared to inflict stripes on so great a man, and when the archbishop told him that thus he had been made to suffer for the king's sinful conduct, Eadbald was struck with compunction, renounced his unlawful marriage, and did all he could to make amends for the scandal he had given. Justus was reinstated in the See of Rochester, but the Londoners refused to receive Mellitus back, preferring their idolatry.

St Lawrence, following the example of his illustrious predecessor, made strenuous efforts to persuade the British and the Irish bishops to put themselves in union with the practice of the Church throughout the world in matters of discipline. His efforts, however, met with little success, and it was not until the year 634 that the southern Irish altered their paschal reckoning, and brought it into line with that of Rome. The northern Irish and the Picts renounced their disobedience in the beginning, the Welsh at the end, of the eighth century.

St Lawrence died in 619, and was laid by the side of St Augustine at Canterbury. St Mellitus succeeded as third archbishop of the metropolitan see.

CHAPTER V

THE CONVERSION OF NORTHUMBRIA—ST PAULINUS, FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF YORK—ST OSWALD, KING AND MARTYR (642)

AFTER the repentance of Eadbald and the recall of the fugitive bishops, Christianity again flourished in the south, and never afterwards lost the ground it had reconquered, but went on extending itself, until the disciples of St Augustine had catholicised nearly all the eastern half of the country.

Among the second company of missionaries sent by St Gregory we have mentioned the monk Paulinus. He is described as a tall, slight man, with stooping shoulders and slender aquiline nose, whose black hair fell round a thin worn face, full of spiritual light and fire. For some time after his arrival in England his energies were devoted to Kent and the neighbouring provinces, till in 625, being made a bishop, he became the apostle of Northumbria. The kingdom of Northumbria extended at that time from the river Humber as far north as Edinburgh (the fortress of Edwin), so named after the Northumbrian king, whose story, intimately connected with that of Paulinus, we are now about to tell.

King Ethelbert of Kent had left a daughter, named Ethelburga, whose hand Edwin sought in marriage. Her brother, Eadbald, replied that a Christian virgin might not wed a pagan, lest she should endanger her faith. Edwin, however, promised that not only the princess herself and her attendants, but any priests who should accompany her, should be allowed the free exercise of their religion, and furthermore pledged

himself to adopt Ethelburga's faith, if on examination he found it to be better than his own. These stipulations made, the Kentish princess set out for the north with a numerous suite, being accompanied by Paulinus. For a year the holy man laboured seemingly in vain, but the wise men and elders of Edwin's council were watching the Christians, and studying in silence the effect of their religion on their lives.

On Easter Sunday 626, as Edwin was holding his court by the Derwent, an assassin in the pay of the king of the West Saxons drew a dagger and made an attempt on the life of the Northumbrian king. Edwin escaped with a slight wound, and that same night Ethelburga gave birth to a daughter. For his own escape and the safety of the queen, Edwin gave thanks to his gods, but Paulinus told him that his thanks were due to the God of the Christians, whose blessing on the king and queen he had implored in the Mass for that day. The child was baptised a Christian, together with eleven others of the king's household, and Edwin promised that if the great Peace-God of the Christians gave him the victory over his enemy the king of the West Saxons, he too would seek baptism at the hands of Paulinus. He returned victorious from his campaign, and never again bent his knee to idols, although he still delayed the full execution of his promise. Pope St Boniface V. had written some time previously, urging him "to receive the Gospel of God," and thus to know Him who created him, who breathed into him the breath of life, who sent His only-begotten Son to redeem him, to snatch him from original sin, and to reward him with heavenly gifts. The zealous Pope wrote also to Ethelburga, urging her not to cease pouring forth prayers that her husband's eyes might be opened to see the beauty and glory of the Christian faith.¹

Before taking the final step, Edwin assembled the Witan, the great council of Northumbria, and con-

¹ Bede, Book II., chaps. 10, 11.

sulted them. The poetry of the northern sages spoke in their reply :—" So seems the life of man, O king," said an aged Thane, " as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in the wintertide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the winter darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it and what after it we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught with certainty of these let us follow it."

Then spoke Coifi, the high priest of Northumbria : " None of your people, Edwin, have worshipped the gods more busily than I, yet there are many more favoured and more fortunate. Were these gods good for anything they would help their worshippers."

St Paulinus was then asked to explain the chief articles of the Christian faith, and the king told the assembly of his resolve to embrace it. When it was asked who would dare to profane the altar of Woden, Coifi leaped on his horse and hurled his spear into the sacred temple, thus declaring that he renounced the worship that had been offered there. The spear stuck in the opposite wall, and to the astonishment of the trembling spectators, the heavens were silent, and the sacrilege remained unavenged.¹

After due preparation and instruction, Edwin was baptised on Easter Sunday, 627, in a wooden chapel, which he had built at York "in honour of St Peter the Apostle," on part of the site now occupied by the Minster. For thirty-six days previously Paulinus had been occupied without intermission in instructing and baptising in the rivers Glen and Swale the converts who crowded round him by hundreds for that purpose.

¹ This took place at Godmundham, near York, on the Derwent. Bede, Book II., chap. 13.

Now began a time of great prosperity for Northumbria. Edwin, at peace with all men, cultivated the arts of civil government, and the country as a result of his efforts was in so good a state that it was said "a woman with her babe might walk scatheless from sea to sea in Edwin's day."

Paulinus was made Archbishop of York, and had received the pallium from Pope Honorius. Being at Lincoln, where he built a stone church, the nucleus of the present cathedral, he there met St Honorius, archbishop-elect of Canterbury, and consecrated him, investing him also with the pallium, which the Pope had sent for that purpose.¹

Unhappily, after about eight years of peace and prosperity, clouds gathered thickly over the entire land. The first approach to a union between the old British nation and the conquering races was an alliance between Penda, the strenuous pagan king of Mercia, and the Welsh prince, Cadwallon,² its object being an attack on Edwin. The armies met at Hatfield Chase in Yorkshire in 633. Of Cadwallon the venerable Bede says: "Though he had the name and profession of a Christian, he was so barbarous in disposition and behaviour that he spared neither women nor the innocent age of children; nor did he pay any regard to the Christian religion that had sprung up among them."

Edwin was killed in the first encounter, and his death was a fatal blow to the infant Church of Northumbria. He is honoured by the Church as a martyr. As Penda and Cadwallon continued to ravage the country, leaving fire and ruin wherever they passed, Paulinus, charging his deacon, James, to keep together his scattered and decimated flock, returned to the south, taking with him the widowed queen, Ethelburga, whom he placed with her daughter, Eanfleda, under the protection of Eadbald, Ethelburga's brother. Eanfleda afterwards returned to Northumbria as the

¹ Bede II., 16, 18.

² Also called Cœdwalla.

wife of its king, Oswy, but her mother retired to Lyminge, where she founded a convent. Eadbald joined his entreaties to those of Archbishop St Honorius to induce Paulinus to administer the vacant see of Rochester,¹ a charge in which he continued till his death in 644.

It is necessary here to go back a little in the history of the Church in Northumbria. Before the time of Edwin, the great pagan warrior, Ethelfrid, had united the two provinces of Northumbria into one kingdom, and had carried war into Wales, murdering the monks of Bangor. When Ethelfrid was slain in battle, his kingdom, after suffering many vicissitudes, was given to Edwin, and Ethelfrid's sons, Eanfrid, Oswald and Osric, fled into the country of the northern Picts. Here they were instructed in the Christian faith, and baptised by the monks of Iona. Later on, after the death of Edwin, Eanfrid recovered part of his father's kingdom, and shared it with his brother Osric, but both relapsed into paganism. Cadwallon, perhaps in revenge for their father's cruelty in Wales, put them to death, and then Oswald, who had kept the faith, appeared and drove back the Mercian and Welsh invaders. Cadwallon was slain in battle, and the place where he fell was thenceforth known as "Heavenfield."

Oswald built up the ruins of Christianity, and when he was firmly seated on the throne of Northumbria, sent to Iona for missionaries. Cormac, the first man who came in answer to the call, was too stern and rigid to make any way with the people, but when he had returned to Iona in disgust, representing the English as a barbarous, stiff-necked and intractable race, the gentle St Aidan was sent to them, and carried all before him. He received episcopal ordination, and fixed his See on the island of Lindisfarne or Holy Island, off the coast of Northumbria.

¹ Its bishop, Romanus, had been drowned on his way to Rome.

St Oswald fell in battle, fighting for the maintenance of Christianity against the fierce inroads of Penda. After the death of Oswald, Penda, the strenuous, continued to ravage the country with fire and sword. It is said that Aidan, from his little island of Farn, a cell of Lindisfarne, saw smoke and flame drifting over the royal fortress of Bamborough, a huge fire having been lighted with the ruins of numberless cottages. Lifting up his hands in prayer, "See, Lord," said Aidan, "what harm Penda is doing!" And according to the story the wind suddenly changed and drove the flames back over those who had kindled them, and Penda was afraid to attack Bamborough, which his soldiers declared to be protected by the God of the Christians.

CHAPTER VI

THE CELTIC MISSIONARIES

TO Iona or Hii, a small, barren and low-lying island composed of slate-rock off the west coast of Scotland, had come from Ireland the Abbot Columba with twelve companions about the year 560. Having founded a monastery in this desolate spot by permission of Brisio, king of the northern Picts, Columba converted him and some of his people, the southern Picts having already embraced Christianity through the efforts of St Ninian, a British missionary sent to them from Rome towards the end of the fourth century. Columba's monastery grew and flourished, and became the refuge of persecuted Christians whenever the still pagan element gained the upper hand. It was also a great missionary school, from which apostles went forth to evangelise the whole country. King Oswald, as we have already seen, learned the Christian religion there, and bided his time until the fresh outbreak of paganism that followed the death of St Edwin was so far spent as to allow of his taking the field against the enemy. When Oswald, as we have further seen, ascended the throne of his ancestors, he sent to Iona for missionaries to reconquer Northumbria for Christ, and after the stern and uncompromising Corman came the saintly Aidan. On his appointment to the Northumbrian mission St Aidan was consecrated bishop, and fixed his see at Lindisfarne, given to him for that purpose by St Oswald.

The venerable Bede describes Aidan as a man of singular meekness, piety and moderation, whose exemplary life helped greatly to advance the doctrine

which he taught. Although a bishop, he kept the monastic rule strictly, and the occasions on which he appeared at court were few. Nevertheless the sympathy between himself and the king was complete. Once as he was sitting at dinner with him on Easter Sunday, a silver dish full of delicate meats was placed before them. At that moment a servant entered and told the king that a crowd of poor folk craved alms at the palace gates. St Oswald at once ordered the untasted food to be taken to them, and the dish to be broken into pieces, and divided among them. Aidan, delighted at the charitable act, seized the king's hand, blessed it, and said, "May this hand never decay." Seven years later, when Oswald fell in battle, fighting against Penda, the same hand and arm being severed from his body remained white and incorrupt, and in Bede's day they were preserved as precious relics in the royal city of Bamborough. Oswald's head was buried at Lindisfarne, and was placed in St Cuthbert's coffin when the monks fled with their sacred relics from the Danes. In 1104, when the coffin was opened in Durham Cathedral, St Oswald's head was found in St Cuthbert's arms. An illustration of this fact is to be seen on the north side of the steeple of St Mary's at Oxford.

The torch of faith that had been so nearly extinguished in Northumbria was on the departure of St Paulinus kept flickering by the zeal of the Deacon James till the missionaries came, when it again shone forth brilliantly, and the whole kingdom of Mercia was won over to Christ.

In the meanwhile, St Birinus had been consecrated bishop by command of Pope Honorius, in the year 634, and had promised that Pontiff "to sow the seed of the holy faith in the interior, beyond the country of the Angles, where no teacher had before been." After converting Kynegils, king of Wessex, Birinus fixed his see at Dorchester, and preached Christianity from the Surrey hills to the Severn.

But not all the rulers and not all the missionaries, devoted and earnest though so many of them were, possessed the gentle, convincing humility of Oswald, of Aidan, of Birinus. The Roman and the Celtic missionaries, united in the same faith and labouring with the one great object of gathering the souls of men into Peter's net, were nevertheless divided by a contention that threatened to become in time a serious obstacle to the attainment of their common end. It was a mere question of discipline, but it came perilously near to one of disobedience, arising in a great measure from a perverse spirit of nationalism. The cause of the dispute has already been briefly alluded to in these pages.

The Celtic, like the British Church, still held to the original computation for the celebration of Easter, and to the shape of the tonsure as custom had prescribed during the period immediately preceding the Saxon invasion of England. That event, with all the accompanying horrors of war, together with the convulsed state of the Continent, had almost entirely for the time being cut off communication between Rome and these islands. It was during this disturbed period that the Pope, weary of the disputes that arose because of the difference between the Egyptian and the Roman method of computation, adopted a new cycle, which in every important point agreed with the Egyptian method. In ignorance of the change, the Britons and the Celts went on reckoning and celebrating Easter as they had always done. Even when conscious of the discrepancy between them and the practice of the universal Church in this regard, they were so wedded to the national custom that they refused to give it up. But unlike the Britons, the Celts had no uncharitable objection to sharing their faith with the conquerors, to working with them, or even to intermarrying with the Anglo-Saxons. Thus, when the Celtic king, Edwin of Northumbria, sought a wife, he solicited and obtained the hand of the Saxon Princess, Ethelburga,

and afterwards King Oswy, who overcame the great and terrible Penda, advised by St Aidan, sought an alliance with Eanfleda, St Edwin's daughter, who had been brought up with her mother's people in Kent, and who followed their customs. When Eanfleda went to her future home in the north, she took with her a chaplain, who observed Easter with her and her attendants according to Roman rule, while her husband followed the Celtic computation. This incongruous proceeding was bound sooner or later to cause inconvenience, and it happened on one occasion that the king and the monks of Iona and Lindisfarne were keeping Easter with due rejoicing at the very moment when the queen and her court were preparing for the solemn fast and mournful offices of Holy Week. So striking was the anomaly that the king decided once for all to get rid of it. Already the question had become acute. St Aidan was now dead, as was also St Finan, his like-minded successor at Lindisfarne, and Ronan, a fellow-countryman of the monks who had studied in Italy and adopted the Roman customs, coming to Lindisfarne, "stimulated them," says Bede, "to a more diligent investigation of the truth." This provoked the sturdy and combative Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, to an active resistance, which brought matters to a crisis.

In the year 664 a synod was convened at Whitby, where a religious house had been founded by the royal Abbess Hilda, herself at first an advocate of the Celtic tradition. At this synod were present besides King Oswy, who presided, his son Alchfrid and the principal clergy of Northumbria, St Cedd, Bishop of the East Angles, St Wilfrid of Ripon, James the Deacon, Colman of Lindisfarne with his clergy, and many others.

Oswy opened the proceedings by setting forth the necessity of one uniform calculation for the time of celebrating Easter for those who were united in the same faith, and he bade the Bishop of Lindisfarne

defend the Celtic manner. Colman thereupon declared that he followed the custom of his forefathers, and pointed in defence of it to the example of St John the Evangelist, who, according to some authority then probably well known, was said to have kept Easter according to Celtic rule. Following St John, Columba, Abbot of Iona, and his successors had adhered to the same method.

Agilbert, Bishop of Dorchester, was then called on to support the Roman practice, but as he was a native of Gaul and possessed little English, he delegated the task to a young priest, Wilfrid of Ripon, tutor to the king's son. After discussing the universal prevalence of the Roman calculation, St Wilfrid proceeded to confute the theory that St John had followed what was now the Celtic custom, and went on to say that the practice of the abbots of Iona, an obscure island in the Scottish sea, ought not to prevail against that of the universal Church.

Colman replied that these abbots were holy men, and could not be supposed to have done wrong, whereupon St Wilfrid argued that, shut off as they were from the rest of the world by their geographical situation, they might be excused on the plea of ignorance, but that if Colman and his clergy, now that they knew the decrees of the Apostolic See, or rather of the universal Church, refused to conform, they would undoubtedly sin. He wound up by asking: "Although that Columba of yours (and I may say *ours* too, as he was Christ's servant) was a saint and wonder-worker, is he to be preferred to the blessed Prince of the Apostles, to whom were given the keys of heaven?"

"You own," said the king to Colman, "that Christ gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Did He give such power to Columba?" "No," replied Colman. "Who, then, is the greater in heaven, Columba or Peter?" All present replied,

"Peter." "Then," said Oswy, "will I obey the decrees of Peter; for if he who has the keys shut me out, who is there to let me in?"

Nearly all the assembly, including the Abbess Hilda and St Cedd, applauded the king's decision, but Colman, refusing to be convinced, resigned his see and retired to Ireland, accompanied by all his brethren who did not wish to adopt "the Catholic Easter and the circular tonsure." Lindisfarne, under "the most meek and revered Eata," Abbot of Melrose, then accepted the new calculation, the victors celebrating the triumph of historic truth over error with becoming modesty and conciliation, but many years were still to pass before the Britons, the northern Picts and the Irish (then called Scots) submitted. The southern Picts, converts of St Ninian, had never followed any other computation than the Roman. The northern Picts, disciples of the monks of Iona, gave in their adhesion in 710, on the advice of Ceolfrid, Abbot of Wearmouth. Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, adopted the discipline of the universal Church in this respect in 701, his community holding out till 715, when they were brought to the same uniformity of observance by the arguments of Egbert, an Anglo-Saxon missionary, who remained with them thirteen years, and "migrated to the Lord" one Easter Sunday after celebrating Mass.

It was not until 777 that the British prelate, Elbod of Benchor, persuaded his compatriots to accept the disciplinary enactments, as they had always accepted the faith and doctrine of the Roman pontiffs.¹

¹ Bede, Book III., chaps. 4, 25, 26, 27; Book V., chaps. 21, 22.

CHAPTER VII

ST THEODORE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—ST
BENEDICT BISCOP—ST WILFRID OF YORK AND
THE HOLY SEE—THE SYNOD OF HERTFORD

THE submission of Nectan, king of the northern Picts, to which reference was made in the foregoing chapter, was in this wise. After much study of ecclesiastical writings, Nectan sent messengers to the venerable abbot of the monastery of the Apostles Peter and Paul, at the mouth of the Tyne, desiring that Ceolfrid would write him a letter containing arguments by means of which he might the more powerfully confute those who still continued to keep Easter out of the canonical time; and also as concerning the form and manner of the Roman tonsure. He further begged that architects might be sent to him to build a church after the Roman style, promising to dedicate it to St Peter, and to follow with his people the customs of the holy Roman Apostolic Church, as far as they could become acquainted with the same in their remoteness from the Eternal City. Nectan dedicated in all seven churches in Pictland to the Prince of the Apostles, introduced the observance of the canonical Easter, and placed his people under the protection of St Peter. This happy issue out of a vexatious misunderstanding took place in 710, the year following the death of St Wilfrid, and was perhaps the result and the reward of his life and sufferings towards that end.

Although a pupil and monk of Lindisfarne, where he had acquired the love of virtue and holiness which

distinguished his whole career, Wilfrid at an early age perceived the defects of the Celtic tradition as regarded canonical observances and discipline. With the consent and encouragement of the monks, he repaired to Rome in order to inform himself of all matters dealing with Catholic ritual at the centre of authority, being accompanied on his journey by the celebrated Benedict Biscop, afterwards Abbot of Wearmouth.

Wishing to study monastic life in those places where it was practised in the highest perfection, Benedict, after visiting seventeen of the most famous monasteries on the Continent, spent two years in the religious house on the island of Lerins, now called St Honorat, near Marseilles, where he received the monastic habit. In the meanwhile, the metropolitan see of Canterbury being vacant, Pope Vitalian created a Greek monk, Theodore of Tarsus, "Archbishop of Britain," a man of profound learning and consummate ability. As his head was entirely shaven, according to the manner of the Greek regular clergy, he remained for four months at Rome after his consecration, till his hair had grown sufficiently for him to receive the circular tonsure. Benedict Biscop accompanied him to England, and was appointed Superior of the monks at Canterbury. Later on he returned to Rome—it was his fourth visit to the holy city—and brought back a choice collection of manuscripts, relics and paintings. Egfrid, king of Northumbria, gave him some land near the mouth of the river Wear, on which he built his first monastery, dedicating it to St Peter. In a short time this house grew and flourished exceedingly, and the reputation of its founder and his monks attracted so many who were desirous of embracing the religious life, that Benedict built a second monastery at Jarrow, on Tyneside, which was destined to become one of the great centres of learning and holiness in the north country. He introduced the

rule of St Benedict in many of its details, and recommended the study of that rule to his monks, but he also retained some of the old monastic customs of Lindisfarne, and added others from his own experience and observation. He sent to France for workmen to teach the art of making glass and of building in stone, wooden churches and houses having hitherto been built in England, with rare exceptions. In spite of the dangers and difficulties of the road, Benedict Biscop made five times the journey to Rome, returning always with literary and other treasures wherewith to enrich the Anglo-Saxon Church.

During this interval St Wilfrid had also returned to England, and about a year after the important synod of Whitby was nominated Bishop of Lindisfarne. Having first transferred his see from Lindisfarne to York, he went to France to seek consecration at the hands of the former Bishop of Dorchester, Agilbert, now Bishop of Paris. But Wilfrid's absence was so much prolonged, that King Oswy, impatient at the delay, and it was said also repenting of his choice, nominated St Chad bishop in his stead. St Chad accordingly hastened to Canterbury for consecration, but Archbishop Theodore had not yet arrived to fill the vacant see, and he proceeded to Winchester, the bishop of that see calling to his aid two British prelates from Devon and Cornwall, as, according to the council of Nicæa, the co-operation of three bishops was required in the consecration of another bishop.

On his return from France, St Wilfrid, finding another bishop in possession of his see and enjoying much popularity, withdrew to his monastery at Ripon; but in due course Theodore arrived in England, and full of ardent zeal, at once set about the visitation of his immense diocese. He was accompanied by the Abbot Adrian as interpreter, for Theodore knew no English, and Adrian, although an African by birth, was very well versed in the Anglo-Saxon tongue.

When they arrived in the north, the anomalous position created by the fact of there being two bishops for one diocese was at once apparent, and Theodore proceeded to an inquiry. He pronounced Chad an intruder, and established Wilfrid in possession of his see, but as no fault could be found with Chad's piety and virtue, a flaw in his ordination alone invalidating it, he was reordained in 669 to the bishopric of Lichfield.

Archbishop Theodore's task was no light one. England was now practically a Christian country, and the time had gone by when a missionary condition of things met the increasing demands for organisation. Hitherto every bishop had been a missionary, exercising jurisdiction over an immense area. He passed in and out among the people, assembling them on the hillside or on some wide plain, journeying up and down continuously, often on foot, evangelising the populations as he travelled. But now that the people professed Christianity, it was necessary to educate them in the Christian life, to adopt a system by which all should receive sufficient instruction, and be enabled to participate regularly in the sacramental life of the Church. This could not be done in the nomad manner of the missionaries, and it was Theodore's task to introduce the diocesan and parochial system, by which the work of each bishop was confined to his own clearly defined diocese, that of each priest to his parish. To inaugurate this system demanded all the genius for ecclesiastical government possessed by the new archbishop, and in bringing order out of chaos he had to encounter difficulties of a singularly tedious kind. But in dealing with these difficulties a principle was called into being which proved of the highest value to the Church in England, and which characterised its history throughout the Middle Ages. This was the establishment of appeals to Rome, in cases of dispute between the clergy and their local superiors, or in any

question of ecclesiastical litigation. The Pope would then sometimes arbitrate in person, but would more frequently delegate the matter to two or three English prelates, who sat, not as ordinary judges, but as emissaries of the Holy See.

Theodore, as a first step to reform, convened a synod of bishops and clergy to meet at Hertford on the 24th September 673. This important synod, the first of all national gatherings, the first expression and confirmation of the idea of ecclesiastical unity throughout England, was the pattern and prototype of our national Parliament. Theodore was the first archbishop to whom all England deferred, and the unity of ecclesiastical rule paved the way for the unity of political rule. Thus the Church was the mother of English Parliaments, and her form of government was the basis upon which the whole structure of political government was subsequently raised.¹ A hundred and fifty years after the first national synod of Hertford King Egbert became sole ruler of England. Archbishop Theodore divided the realm into twelve dioceses, cutting up the vast districts hitherto vaguely apportioned to each bishop into more manageable dimensions. Northumbria was cut into three parts, each part being supplied with a bishop consecrated by Theodore, who, in spite of his former vindication of Wilfrid's rights, now acted with singular injustice. Wilfrid, who had, moreover, fallen into disfavour with Egfrid, king of Northumbria, thus found himself again a bishop without a bishopric, and after a vain protest, he appealed from his metropolitan to the superior authority of the Pope. This appeal is memorable as the first recorded instance of the practical application of the principle that the Pope is every man's ordinary, and the Apostolic See the all-competent court of first instance for the whole of Christendom.²

¹ Green, *A Short History of the English People*, p. 30.

² F. W. Maitland, *Roman Canon Law in the Church of England*, p. 104.

The deprived bishop went to Rome, and a council of fifty prelates was called to examine his case. They decided in his favour, and St Wilfrid returned to Northumbria provided with a papal Bull ordering his reinduction into his see. But his absence had only served to increase the enmity of the king, who, although he called a synod "to hear the salutary councils sent by the Apostolic See for the peace of the Churches," subsequently threw the bishop into prison, not as some have pretended because Egfrid rejected papal authority, but in order to extort from Wilfrid a confession that he had obtained the Bull by false pretences, or even that he had forged it. St Wilfrid, however, by his constancy, overcame all the machinations of his enemies, and at last regained his freedom on condition that he should leave Northumbria. Through all his vicissitudes the saint had possessed his soul in patience, and before his death Archbishop Theodore expressed regret for the injustice with which he had treated him. He wrote letters to the kings of Mercia and Northumbria testifying to Wilfrid's innocence and merit, and adjured the successor of Egfrid to become reconciled to the exiled bishop, "for the fear of the Lord, and on account of the command of the Apostolic See."

CHAPTER VIII

THE SYNOD OF HATFIELD—SECOND APPEAL OF ST WILFRID TO ROME—ERECTION OF THE METROPOLITAN SEE OF YORK—COUNCIL OF CLOVESHOE

NEXT in importance to the synod of Whitby and the synod of Hertford was the assembly of the bishops and the more learned of the lower ranks of the clergy at Hatfield, in Yorkshire, in 679.

At Whitby the great principle of union with Rome, even in mere matters of discipline, had been vindicated. At Hertford the large territorial districts hitherto loosely considered as dioceses, but which were really great missionary areas, were subdivided into clearly-defined bishoprics and parishes, the hierarchy being made to consist of one metropolitan and eleven suffragan bishops.

The following year, the Pope having sent a papal commissary, the Abbot John of St Martin's and arch-cantor of St Peter's, "to carefully inform himself concerning the faith of the English Church," the first great provincial council took place at Hatfield. Archbishop Theodore inquired minutely into the doctrines confessed by each prelate, and "found that they all unanimously agreed in the Catholic faith." A document to this effect was then drawn up, and the Abbot John returned with it to Rome, where it was "most thankfully received by the apostolic Pope and all those who heard or read it."

So far all was well; the English were free from the taint of heresy, but affairs in the north were still in a troubled condition. The immediate result of

Theodore's testimony to St Wilfrid's innocence and virtue was his restoration to his monasteries of Hexham and Ripon, and his reinstatement in the bishopric of York, although his jurisdiction was greatly curtailed, St Cuthbert ruling the church of Lindisfarne till his death in 687. Moreover, when Wilfrid had governed Hexham for one year, it was given to St John of Beverley, and after he had struggled on for five years, King Egfrid ordered him to resign the abbey and revenues of Ripon. He refused, for of all his churches he valued mostly that of Ripon, and the monks of that place, the first community in the north country to follow the rule of St Benedict, revered Wilfrid as their father and benefactor. As he could not be persuaded to give up Ripon, the king ejected him forcibly, and threw him into prison in Bamborough Castle. Here, in a dark dungeon, in complete isolation from the outer world, he was left to pine, while from time to time the king sent him assurances that he should regain possession of a part of his former diocese and many other favours if he would say that the decrees he had brought from Rome were not genuine. The holy man's only reply was that he would rather lose his head than say such a thing. Egfrid would probably have left his victim to languish in prison till death, but for the clever intervention of one of Wilfrid's friends. The Queen Ermenburga, a vindictive and unprincipled woman, and the real cause of Egfrid's persecution of Wilfrid, fell ill during a visit to Coldingham, and appeared to be in danger of death. The Abbess of Coldingham, hastening with the tidings to the king, declared that if he would restore the bishop to his diocese, or at least set him free, she doubted not but that the queen would recover, otherwise death would overtake her, and he himself would not escape punishment. Egfrid, terrified, at once set Wilfrid at liberty. He fled to Mercia, where he founded a religious house, but

the enmity of Egfrid's sister, wife of the king of Mercia, pursued him, and he was again forced to fly. Wessex seemed to offer a safe refuge, but its queen was Ermenburga's sister, and again he was obliged to become a fugitive. The south Saxons were still pagans, living among hills and dense forests, and to them Wilfrid now turned his steps. He was well received, and in return for their hospitality taught them many useful arts, by which they made great progress in civilisation. This prepared the way for their conversion, so that after about ninety years from the coming of St Augustine, the whole Saxon Heptarchy, with the Isle of Wight, had accepted Christianity.

In the year 702, Britwald, Theodore's successor in the metropolitan see of Canterbury, summoned a council or synod at Onestrefield, at which nearly all the bishops of England were present, and invited St Wilfrid to attend. On his arrival, the latter was required to promise on oath that he would abide by the decree of his metropolitan, a stratagem on the part of his adversaries to deprive him of the right of appeal to Rome. He replied that it was his wish and his duty to abide by that decree, provided it were conformable to the canons and previous decrees of the Apostolic See, and from this standpoint neither threats nor arguments could move him.

He was declared contumacious, and ordered to relinquish the exercise of his episcopal functions, being offered as a favour the monastery of Ripon in which to confine himself. Indignant, he exclaimed: "What! shall I who have spent my whole life in the service of religion, I to whom my country is indebted for the knowledge and practice of canonical observances, tamely subscribe to my own degradation, and though unconscious of guilt confess myself a criminal? No, if justice be denied me here, I appeal to a higher tribunal; and let the man who presumes to depose me from the episcopal dignity accompany

me to Rome, and prove his charge before the Sovereign Pontiff."

Although now about seventy years old, Wilfrid once more set out on the toilsome journey to Rome. The result of his second appeal, in spite of all his enemies could do, was an order to Archbishop Britwald to assemble a council, and leave the intruded bishops of York and Hexham either to come to terms with Wilfrid, or to proceed to the city of the apostles there to state their case before a more competent authority. Britwald, now penitent, together with the kings of Kent and Mercia, received the pilgrim on his return with tears of joy, promising obedience to every item of the Pope's letters. The King of Northumbria, Egfrid's successor, alone held out, but he was struck on a sudden with a mortal disease, and with his last breath repented of his sin against the bishop and the Holy See.¹

The archbishop then convened a synod on the Nidd, one of the tributaries of the Yorkshire Ouse, and read the Pope's letters to a great gathering of bishops, abbots and princes. The Abbess Elfreda, daughter of the King of Northumbria, told them of her father's repentance, and of a vow he had made that if life were given him he would put into execution all the decisions of the Apostolic See with regard to St Wilfrid. It was decided that peace should be made, and that the monasteries of Hexham and Ripon should be restored with their revenues, but Wilfrid himself declined to be reinstated in the see of York, into which St John of Beverley had been intruded. He was, he said, too old and infirm to take up anew the burden of so great a diocese, and the see of Hexham being vacant, he agreed to become its bishop. Unanimity was thus finally established; those concerned promised to forget all causes of dissension and exchanged the kiss of peace.

Having successfully fought the heathen powers of

¹ Bede, Book V., chap. 8.

darkness, and introduced the light of the true faith into Britain, the Church had had to meet another foe in the insidious growth of the Pelagian heresy, and when that danger was overcome, it was her duty to wage war upon the subtle form of nationalism that would have exaggerated legitimate local customs into eccentricities seriously interfering with the order and discipline of the whole Catholic world. And now that peace was restored, and the faith of the English had been proved free from the taint of heresy, she might reasonably have hoped to flourish and expand, and to perform her mission to the souls of men without let or hindrance. But prosperity, though a good friend, can also be a dangerous enemy. After the death of Theodore, laxness and corruption began their deadly work among the English, and one of their own missionaries, St Boniface, from the midst of the dark forests of Germany, where his zealous apostolate was rapidly causing the pagan altars to be overthrown, raised an accusing voice against the moral degeneracy of his fellow-countrymen.

Pope Zachary was not slow to listen to the voice, and he commanded Archbishop Cuthbert forthwith to call a council, and proceed to the reformation of abuses and corrupt practices. Accordingly in 747 a synod was held at Cloveshoe, a place that has been identified as Dorchester in Oxfordshire, and again as Rochester. King Ethelbald and the archbishop presided, and at least eleven other bishops, as well as many abbots and other ecclesiastics, were present. Cuthbert opened the proceedings by reading the Pope's letters in Latin and in English. They were addressed to all the English, in words of warning, exhortation and entreaty. Those who should disobey the Pope's commands were threatened with excommunication. After admonishing bishops and abbots concerning their duty, Zachary reminded all priests of their obligation to devote themselves to the service of the altar, to the exclusion of secular

business, to give themselves up to study and prayer, the instruction of the faithful in the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, "as well as likewise the most holy words which are solemnly uttered in the celebration of Mass, and in the office of baptism." Fasting on ember days was strictly enjoined, and monks and nuns were to live according to their holy calling, and to "prepare themselves incessantly to become worthy of the most holy communion of the body and blood of the Lord."

When the archbishop, rising up, asked the assembly what faith they held, and what the Christianity they practised, with one voice all present replied: "Be it known to your Paternity that the faith we hold is that which was planted in the beginning by the holy Roman and Apostolic See, under the direction of the most blessed Pope Gregory; and what we believe without wavering we are anxious to practise as far as we can."

The year 750 is remarkable for the establishment by Pope Gregory III. of the metropolitan see of York. The then Bishop of York, Egbert, was raised to the dignity of archbishop, and the Pope sent him the pallium, which had never been granted by the Holy See to any of the bishops of Northumbria since the time of St Paulinus. Egbert was of royal race, brother of St Edbert, King of Northumbria. He ruled the Church of York for thirty-four years, and founded the famous school of which Alcuin, the friend and counsellor of Charlemagne, was one of the most brilliant ornaments.

The division of the country into two great provinces, Canterbury and York, was momentarily disturbed by Offa, the powerful king of Mercia, who had with great importunity prevailed on Pope Adrian I. to create a third metropolitan see at Lichfield. This took place in 771, but some years later, being entreated by the English prelates, St Leo III. abolished the privilege of Lichfield, and Canterbury became once more the sole metropolitan see of the south.

CHAPTER IX

CHARACTER OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH (597-1066)

HAVING arrived at the eve of the Norman Conquest, it will be well to pause and consider the nature and character of that part of the universal Church the history of which we have been studying. We have seen that the Anglo-Saxon Church not only fully recognised papal authority, but that this principle was ever being more and more brought out and confirmed. The reader will therefore be prepared to find that the religious worship taught and practised in England between the landing of St Augustine and the landing of William of Normandy differed in no essential point from the worship offered to God to-day in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and in every Roman Catholic church in Great Britain and throughout the world. Everywhere the great central act of worship was the Sacrifice of the Mass, offered for the living and the dead. Anglo-Saxon writers speak of the Mass not merely in terms of profound reverence and devotion, but with great accuracy, showing that they were well instructed in its theology. In general they refer to it as "the celebration of the most sacred mysteries," "the celestial and mysterious sacrifice," "the offering of the Victim of our salvation," "the sacrifice of the Mediator," "the memorial of Christ's Passion," "the renewal of the Passion and Death of the Lamb."

In writing of that part of the Canon called the Consecration, they say that "its elements of bread and wine are through the ineffable hallowing of the Spirit made to pass into the mystery of Christ's Flesh

and Blood," and that "the holy Body and the precious Blood of the Lamb, by whom we have been redeemed, are again immolated to God for the benefit of our salvation," always referring to the Mass as "a sacrifice," "an oblation," and to the consecrated Host as "the Divine Victim."

Communion was received in the Mass under both kinds, but out of the Mass in one kind only, the Anglo-Saxons, our forefathers, understanding perfectly that the Body, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ were really and substantially present, even under the form of bread alone. The sick, as at all times in the history of the Church, received in one kind.

Until the Reformation, the English name for the Blessed Eucharist was *Housel*, a word which implies a victim of sacrifice, and which was beyond doubt a term used by the Anglo-Saxons even before their conversion, to express the idea of the sacrifice of a living victim. Throughout the middle ages, if any one died without confession and communion, he was said to have died "unshriven and unhouselled." At first, in days of persecution, all who were present at the Mass communicated; later on, the practice of weekly communion was almost universal, but as people grew less fervent, this custom was chiefly confined to those who had embraced religious life; and ordinary Christians living in the world contented themselves with a general communion on the great festivals of Christmas, the Epiphany and Easter. The venerable Bede urged Archbishop Egbert to reform what was then considered an abuse, and to exhort those whose religious conduct entitled them to the privilege of communicating every Sunday and holiday, not to absent themselves from the heavenly banquet. The bishops assembled at the synod of Cloveshoe were of one mind with the holy monk in this matter. The communicant was enjoined, moreover, to receive fasting, and it was necessary that he should previously have confessed his sins, have performed the penance

imposed by the priest, and have obtained leave to communicate. "We enjoin," runs one of Archbishop Egbert's enactments, "that no man taste of the housel unfasting, unless it be for extreme sickness."¹ The same authority declared that those who did not communicate at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost could not be considered Catholics.²

The bread used in the Holy Sacrifice was unleavened, without salt, and round in shape. It was called in Anglo-Saxon *offlete*, which word was corrupted into *obley* during the fifteenth century. It is identical with the Latin word *oblata*, offering.

Anglo-Saxon altars were often magnificent in themselves and magnificently furnished, the people testifying to their faith and devotion by splendid gifts. Thus King Ina gave 264 lbs of gold for an altar at Glastonbury, and 2640 lbs. of silver for the church. He also gave a chalice and paten of pure gold, with images of the twelve apostles in massive silver. At York were two altars encased in plates of gold and silver, and ornamented with jewels of inestimable value. Missals were richly decorated and adorned with precious stones. The churches were often constructed after the model of the Roman basilicas, and there is frequent mention in the records of this period of the exact measurements of St Peter's at Rome, with which church Anglo-Saxon pilgrims were familiar, the roads to Rome being almost as much frequented in those days of difficult travelling as they are now. Eight Saxon kings made pilgrimages to the holy city; four spent the remainder of their lives there.

Penances imposed in confession were rigorous compared with modern custom. Sins of frailty were expiated by fasts of ten, twenty or thirty days; for sins of malice a long course of penance was enjoined, sometimes covering a period of five or seven years, or

¹ Thorpe, *Excerpt Egberti*, vol. 2, p. 253.

² *Ibid*, p. 103.

even a lifetime. For public sins public penances were assigned until the twelfth century, and these penances were performed during the forty days of Lent. The penitent presented himself at the church door on Ash Wednesday, barefoot and clothed in sackcloth; the bishop led him into the sacred building, where he prostrated himself, and stretching out his arms, recited the seven penitential psalms. He was then sprinkled with holy water, and was led out, to be readmitted on Maundy Thursday.

The seven canonical hours of prayer were observed daily by monks and clergy, the Divine Office being said or sung, as was also the Mass, in Latin. The sermon was preached and the epistle and gospel were read aloud in the vernacular. Mass was said every day, but on Sundays and holidays it was surrounded with more pomp and ceremony.

Sunday was a freol's-day or day of freedom; it was reckoned from sunset on Saturday to sunset on the following day, and during the interval no servile work might be done. By servile work was interpreted husbandry, gardening, tree-felling, building, hewing, &c. for men, and for women, weaving, washing, sewing, wool-combing, sheep-shearing, &c. "Sunday," said Archbishop Theodore, "is very solemnly to be revered; therefore we command that no man dare on that holy day to apply to any worldly work, unless for the preparing of his food, except it happen that he must of necessity journey. Then he may ride or row, or journey by such convenience as may be suitable to his way, on the condition that he hear his Mass and neglect not his prayers."

Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers held prayers for the dead in high estimation, and their belief in purgatory is very clearly manifested in the history of the period. Thus the venerable Bede begged that, in consideration of his having written the life of St Cuthbert, the monks of Lindisfarne would at his death offer prayers and Masses for him as they would for one of them-

selves. Ancient stones and crosses may still be seen all over the country with inscriptions asking prayers for the dead. At Bewcastle still stands the shaft of what was once a funeral cross of most elegant shape and design, dating from the eighth century, with a runic inscription, begging for prayers for the soul of one Alcfrith, son of Oswin. The *Liber Pœnitentialis* of Archbishop Theodore has this paragraph: "For seven days after a man's death we bewail all the sins he committed and that he ought not to have committed; then until the thirtieth day we pray also for those things that he ought to have done and did not do. On the thirtieth day we offer the Holy Sacrifice for him."

Devotion to the angels and saints was a prominent characteristic of the Anglo-Saxons, and next to their love and veneration of our Lord was their devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Poets such as Aldhelm, Cædmon and Alcuin sang her praises, and in every church a chapel was erected in her honour. "Let all St Mary's feast-tides be strictly honoured, first by fasting and afterwards by feasting," enjoined one of the laws of King Ethelred. Her Nativity, the Annunciation, the Purification and the Assumption were kept as solemn festivals.

It is impossible here to do more than mention a very few names among those who are the glory of the Anglo-Saxon Church, to tell of Cuthbert the wonder-worker, of Cædmon the angelic singer, of Benedict Biscop the indefatigable pilgrim to the tombs of the Apostles, of Aldhelm the learned minstrel-bishop, of John of Beverley the healer, of Winfrid or Boniface the Apostle of Germany, and countless other lights that shone as the stars of heaven in a clear firmament. Devoted sons of the Apostolic See, they were true and loyal Englishmen, seeking to serve in all things the best interests of their country. The Venerable Bede, who still excites so fervent an enthusiasm in English hearts to-day, and whose *Ecclesiastical*

History is our principal source of information concerning the first century and a half after the landing of St Augustine, testifies abundantly to the Roman and papal character of the Anglo-Saxon Church. In all that he tells us about it we see our own religion, while we recognise his in the worship offered to God in every one of our churches in England to-day.

CHAPTER X

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

GLORIOUS as had been the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon Church, it cannot be denied that it suffered eclipse during the greater part of the ninth century. The clear lights that shone from those great centres of sanctity and learning—Mailros, Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Wearmouth, Ripon, Croyland—were one by one extinguished. Glastonbury alone survived. In Alfred's day the religious life was held in such contempt that no freeman was found in all Wessex to embrace it. Scholars were few, and learning was no longer in repute. Cuthbert, Bede, Wilfrid, Benedict had all gone to their reward, and Alcuin, the king's learned friend, rebuked, counselled and exhorted in vain.

One cause of the nation's degeneracy may have lain in the very fact of its prosperity, in that feeling of "security" which is mortal's "chiefest enemy," so that luxury invaded the once strenuous life and lowered all its aims. Certain it is that gradually a meaner standard of morals and manners obtained, and when the northern pirates, vikings from Denmark and the Baltic, effected a landing on these shores, they met with scant resistance from the now effeminate English. Traces of the atrocities perpetrated may be seen up and down the country to this day. Alfred, driven from his royal city of Winchester to be a wanderer among his people, still worked bravely for their rehabilitation, and for the extirpation of the foreigner. But drunkenness, love of ease and every kind of excess, made it difficult to rouse them to efficient resistance to the invaders. The land was

seamed with the smouldering minsters and parish churches that marked the devastating march of the triumphant Danes, and their third descent on our shores resulted in the establishment of a Danish dynasty. The humiliation of the country was complete under Sweyn, although his son, Cnut, proved a good ruler, and after his conversion to Christianity, was a faithful son of the Church. His death was the signal for a return to many of the evils which he had in part removed, and when his two sons had filled up the measure of iniquities, and there were no more of his race to succeed them, the now united English and Danes turned to the one remaining scion of the old Saxon line, and the son of Ethelred mounted the throne.

Edward the Confessor, the noblest, the most devout of England's line of kings, was worthy to close the annals of a Church that had been rich in royal saints. From having been bred up in Normandy he was not wholly English in his affections, and he filled English benefices and offices of state for the most part with foreigners, which caused a good deal of irritation in high places. But the people loved him well, and it was long before they ceased in evil days to come, to clamour for the good laws of Edward the Confessor. Moreover, there were not many among the English fit to rule in the Sanctuary or in the State, but the saintly king was not slow to make use of good material wherever he recognised it. Thus St Wulstan received his pastoral staff from the hands of Edward himself, and the new Bishop of Worcester was an Englishman of the best type, earnest, patient and persevering, whose sturdy piety was illumined with a gentle humour that endeared him to all with whom he came in contact. Wulstan bore some resemblance to his predecessor in the see of Worcester, the great St Dunstan of Glastonbury, whose extraordinary capacity, in conjunction with that of St Ethelwold, St Oswald and Edgar, had succeeded in bringing

some degree of order out of the chaos created by the invaders.

Perhaps the one event of Edward's reign which concerns us most in our day is the rebuilding of the Abbey of Thorney, afterwards famous as the Benedictine Abbey of Westminster. The king had made a vow when in exile to visit the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul if ever he came to his own; but on his accession, the Witan strongly opposed his leaving the kingdom, in view of the troubled times and the danger to which his crown might be exposed in his absence. Therefore Pope Leo IX. commuted his vow to the obligation of giving in alms to the poor the money which he would have spent on his pilgrimage to Rome, and of either building or restoring a church in honour of St Peter. The church was ready for consecration on the Feast of the Holy Innocents 1065, but the king lay dying. He breathed his last on the following Feast of the Epiphany, and was buried in front of the high altar. William the Conqueror had his coffin enclosed in gold and silver, and in 1103 the body was found to be still incorrupt. Edward's sanctity had been declared by popular acclamation at the time of his death, and on his canonisation by Alexander III., his relics were translated to a more convenient place behind the high altar, the top of his tomb rising above it. In the reign of Henry III. they were placed in a magnificent shrine in the chapel which was then built, and which to this day bears the name of the Confessor.

Godwin, Earl of Kent, was the first layman to guide the helm of state in England, and while King Edward had prayed and given alms, superintended the building of Westminster Abbey, touched for the King's evil, and won the love of his people by his charity and holiness; Godwin was in fact ruling the country. Ambitious and not over-scrupulous, he had married his daughter to the king, and had persuaded him to create his two sons earls of Anglia and Mercia.

He further used his influence with Edward to induce him to acknowledge the elder of the two, Harold, as his heir, and contrived to get him recognised by the English as their future sovereign. So carefully had Godwin's plans been laid for the aggrandisement of his family, that on Edward's death Harold at once took possession of the vacant throne.

Nevertheless, the great Duke William of Normandy immediately laid claim to the crown on the plea that Edward had promised it to him, and that Harold had sworn a most solemn oath over some sacred relics to deliver it up to him when the time came. Fierce as was the powerful descendant of the Norsemen, he was not wanting in subtlety or statecraft, and he contrived to win over the Pope to his cause, urging that Harold was a perjurer, and that Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a supporter of the antipope. He was careful to conceal the fact that Harold's oath had been extorted from him when the Saxon pretender was virtually a prisoner in the hands of the Duke of Normandy, and that he knew nothing of the presence of the relics on account of which he was supposed to have added sacrilege to his perjury. So convinced was the Pope of the justice of William's claim, that he solemnly blessed the expedition which the formidable Duke at once set on foot, and sent him a consecrated banner. William on his part made a vow to build an abbey on the spot where he should obtain a decisive victory over Harold.

The 14th October 1066 marks an epoch in the history of England. On that day was fought a bloody battle on the heights of Senlac, near Hastings. When the flower of Norman knighthood and chivalry was in danger of being utterly overthrown by the dense masses of rude and ill-armed but valiant Saxon peasantry, who by reason of their splendid position were well able to repulse the invaders, something like a panic took place in the Norman ranks. But then William, shouting, "I live, and will conquer yet!"

flung himself into the thickest of the fray. From dawn till dusk the fight raged, and when the night fell, it covered the disordered flight of the English. Harold lay stark where the *mêlée* had been, a shaft from a Norman bow piercing his right eye. On that spot soon afterwards rose the high altar of Battle Abbey.

But England was not won when William of Normandy gained the battle of Hastings. Norman fortresses all over the country still remind us of a long struggle, although the invader was crowned at Westminster on Christmas Day 1066. The greater part of England remained aloof and ready to break out into open revolt whenever the opportunity offered, and even the loyalty of London was only ensured by the erection of the White Tower, the nucleus of that stronghold that played so prominent a part in subsequent history. It was the eve of great changes, although these changes did not affect the religion of the country, except in so far as the once flourishing but now flagging vitality of the Church in England received newly infused vigour. Saxons and Normans shared the same faith, and in this point were equal. But the Normans were vastly superior to the conquered race in all arts and crafts, in manners, and in all that required organisation and method. They soon began to build in England not fortresses only, but churches and abbeys, which for long centuries were, and even still are, the architectural boast of the country. We find the invaders, it is true, in Dover Castle, in the Keep at Arundel, at Pevensey, in the Tower of London, and in many other places built for defence, but they are still more impressive in Tewkesbury Abbey, in Durham Cathedral, at Ely, Peterborough and Norwich, and in countless parish churches scattered all over the country.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONFLICT OF SAXON AND NORMAN

ONE of the first papal acts after the coronation of William, Duke of Normandy, as king of England, was the sending of two legates to England at the request of the new king, to inquire into the prevailing irregularities and want of discipline among the Saxon hierarchy. As the first result of the inquiry, Stigand, the last Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury, was deposed in the year 1070. The charges against him were that he had obtruded himself into the see during the life of its legitimate archbishop, Robert, had even dared to use Robert's pallium, and had accepted one also from the antipope, "whom the holy Roman Church had excommunicated." Stigand, together with his brother Agilmar, Bishop of the East Angles, whose crimes equalled his own, and several abbots were solemnly deposed and degraded. When this and other business was concluded, the Cardinal legates returned to Rome, taking with them Peter Pence, "which of right belonged to the Apostolic purse." The secular arm then relegated Stigand to prison, but the Pope, considering that he had been sufficiently punished, remonstrated with William, and urged him to defend ecclesiastics, protect in mercy widows, orphans and the oppressed, mindful of the account he would have to render for them to the King of kings, the High Arbiter of all his kingdom.

The vacant see was then offered to Lanfranc, Abbot of Bec in Normandy, a distinguished scholar, an able controversialist, and a firm upholder of the

rights of the Papacy. His election proved eventually the greatest possible blessing to the English episcopate, but the disorders incident on conquest were not all at once subdued, and many deeds of violence were committed before the country settled down peaceably under the new rule. The Normans were guilty of numberless acts of injustice and cruelty in their dealings with the Saxons, and even Lanfranc did not at first always discriminate between the very real degeneracy of the English episcopate and the rare instances of individual worth, and even of sanctity still to be found in its midst. When the Normans plundered the church and monastery of Worcester, and carried off the treasure which, at the time of the invasion, wealthy persons had deposited there for safety, St Wulstan stood up in the king's council chamber, and in plain, blunt terms called upon William of Normandy to make amends. For this he not only incurred William's anger, but Lanfranc's suspicion and disapproval also, and at a synod held at Westminster Abbey, Wulstan was called upon to deliver up his ring and crozier, weakness and incapacity being the reasons advanced for his deposition. The story goes that Wulstan, rising from his seat, grasped his pastoral staff firmly, and in a strong voice replied: "Of a truth, my lord archbishop, of a truth I know that I am not worthy of this dignity, nor sufficient for its duties. I knew it when the clergy elected, when the prelates compelled, when my master King Edward summoned me to the office. He, by the authority of the Apostolic See, laid this burden upon my shoulders, and with this staff ordered me to be invested with the episcopal degree." Continuing, Wulstan declared that he would yield it to none but to him who had conferred it on him, and advancing solemnly towards the Confessor's tomb, he drove the crozier into the stone which covered King Edward's body, and returned to his place. To the amazement of all present, it remained immovably

imbedded in the stone, and Lanfranc burst into tears when even the king's powerful arm failed to remove it. Ordered to take back his crozier, the saint meekly obeyed, and lifting his hand gently drew forth the staff without the least effort. From that day Lanfranc and Wulstan were friends, and the king delighted to do Wulstan honour. But he remained as simple as ever, always appearing at court in his old lamb-skin garment, although it was urged that costly furs, such as fox or sable, would better befit his dignity. The skins of such shifty animals, he replied humorously, might do very well for experienced men of the world, but for himself, he was a plain man, and content with lamb-skin. "At least," said the courtier, "you might wear cat-skin." "Crede mihi," answered Wulstan, "believe me, my lord, I have often heard *Agnus Dei* sung, but never *Catus Dei*," and he continued to wear his old coat.

Wulstan's predecessor in the See of Worcester presents a fair example of what the more zealous and energetic Anglo-Saxon bishops were at the time of the Norman Conquest. Bishop Aldred, while he had a due regard for the rights of the Church and of the poor, and was prepared to do battle for these when occasion required, was by no means blameless in the matter of pluralities. He held two bishoprics, Hereford as well as Worcester. When called upon to resign one of them, he resigned Hereford, but contrived to get himself nominated to the Archbishopric of York. When, however, he went to Rome for his pallium, the Pope at first refused to confirm his election, on account of the irregularity of his proceeding. Nevertheless, reconsidering his decision, Nicholas II. ultimately allowed him to retain the metropolitan see of York, provided that he surrendered Worcester. Aldred then returned to England, and the Pope sent two cardinals to induct Wulstan into the vacant see.

As Archbishop of York, Aldred placed the crown on the conqueror's head, Stigand, Archbishop of

Canterbury, being suspended. Aldred was no time-server, and about three years after the coronation, he took occasion to reprove William soundly for a high-handed act of spoliation committed by one of the State officials against Church property. It was at the time of one of the great ecclesiastical festivals, and waggon-loads of provisions, the produce of episcopal lands, were being brought into York for the celebration of the feast. The sheriff of the city went out, seized the whole of the provisions, and had them conveyed to the king's storehouses. In vain the archbishop remonstrated and demanded restitution; there was nothing to be done but to go to London and demand justice of the king himself. Having performed his devotions at Westminster Abbey, Aldred entered the royal presence vested in full pontificals. William, who was prepared to meet him in a friendly spirit, graciously rose to greet him, and offered him the kiss of peace. But the archbishop would not hear of peace until justice had been satisfied. Refusing the salutation, Aldred sternly reminded the king that God had given him the realm of England, and that he himself had placed the crown on his head, and had given him his blessing. "And now," he said, "I come not to bless but to curse thee as a persecutor of the Church, and as faithless to the oaths sworn before the altar of God." William, struck with terror, fell at Aldred's feet, imploring to be told of his sin. The bystanders would have raised him from the ground, but the archbishop, forbidding them to interfere, said: "He lies not at my feet, but at those of St Peter, whom he has outraged in the person of his successor." Then he stretched out his hand and raised the king, and told the story of the theft committed by his officials at York. William not only sent Aldred back in safety to his diocese the next day, but a high officer of state followed quickly after him bearing a royal letter, containing orders that all that had been taken away should be

restored, even to the cords with which the sacks had been tied. Thenceforth, as long as the Conqueror lived, no man dared touch the property of the Church.

Nevertheless, William I., like many of his successors, was extremely negligent in regard to the payment of Peter Pence, an annual donation to the Pope which had been made since very early times. There had been at first little difficulty in collecting the money, but it was notorious that after the Norman Conquest only about a third of the actual contributions of the English people ever reached Rome.

In 1074 St Gregory VII. called William's attention to this fact, and meeting with no response, sent a legate to England two years later to ask for greater exactness in the payment of Peter Pence. The legate urged among other considerations, that as the Conqueror had to a certain extent come to his kingdom by the Pope's help, he should, following the example of some other rulers, do homage to the Sovereign Pontiff for his temporalities, taking an oath of fealty to him as his vassal. To this second request William returned a decided refusal, declaring that he owed no fealty in temporal matters to the Holy See, but he promised to see to the better collection of Peter Pence, and said that the negligence had been caused by his absence from England. His refusal to become a temporal vassal of the Holy See has been sometimes misrepresented as meaning that he repudiated the spiritual authority and jurisdiction of the Pope, although his treatment of ecclesiastical persons and affairs proves beyond doubt that he revered the Apostolic See as the centre of religious authority, and as divinely instituted for the government of the Church.

On his death-bed, William I. expressed remorse for his acts of violence, declared that he had always honoured holy Church, and had never made traffic of ecclesiastical preferments. He commended himself,

says the chronicler,¹ to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, that by her holy prayers she might reconcile him to her dear Son, his Lord, Jesus Christ. After uttering these words he fell back and expired.

¹ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum*, l. 1, p. 13.

CHAPTER XII

THE TWO FIRST NORMAN ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY

IT has become the custom in recent years to hang up in some of the cathedrals and other churches belonging to the Protestant Establishment in this country printed lists of the archbishops of Canterbury from St Augustine down to the actual occupant of the see and of Lambeth Palace, as if there had been no break in the succession, no change in the dispensation, but as if the same ecclesiastical condition of things had always existed. This is also done with the names of Anglican bishops of any other diocese, and with the names of the Protestant vicars who now officiate in the venerable old parish churches built by Catholics for Catholic worship, centuries before Henry VIII. wrenched the Church of England from the Holy See, adding the names of these post-reformation clergy to those of the old Catholic parish priests, as if all alike belonged to the same religion. In the present St Paul's Cathedral, a building erected after the great fire of London in 1688, on the site of the metropolitan church begun by St Mellitus, are tables containing the names of the bishops of London from the first Catholic bishop, Mellitus, to the Protestant Dr. Winnington Ingram, although no Catholic worship was ever offered to God in that church. There would be little harm in this were it not that it leads the ignorant and the unwary into a belief in the so-called continuity of the Church of England of the present day, its *oneness* so to speak with that of pre-reformation times, a theory which takes no account

of the clean sweep of Catholic doctrine made by the reformers. By placing Cardinal Pole, the last Catholic archbishop of Canterbury, next to Dr. Parker, without a word of explanation, it might naturally be inferred that between the two there was no deep gulf fixed, and that the one carried on the teaching, authority and jurisdiction of the other, whereas the reverse of this was the case.

The deep gulf to which we have referred, separating the old religion from the new, is already exemplified, if we compare the manner in which the present archbishop of Canterbury was elected with that of Archbishop Lanfranc's election in 1070. In the case of the former, the then Prime Minister nominated Dr. Randall Davidson, the king approved the choice, and the canons of Canterbury were instructed to elect him, after which he was consecrated according to the Anglican rite, took the oath of allegiance and did homage to his Majesty. No ecclesiastic had really any choice or authority in the matter. Lord Salisbury as head of the government made the appointment, the king as head of the church approved it, and the rest followed as a matter of course. It would be manifestly absurd to pretend that the Pope had hand or voice in Dr. Davidson's election. Lanfranc, on the other hand, in a letter which he wrote to Pope St Gregory VII., after addressing him as "the revered supreme pastor of the Universal Church," goes on to declare that it is "by the authority of the Apostolic See" that he is invested with the dignity of archbishop of Canterbury, a statement which differentiates him at once from all post-reformation primates of England, beginning with Matthew Parker.

It had been no easy task to draw Lanfranc from his beloved monastery of Bec, which his learning had raised to be the most famous school in Christendom, and nothing but the plea of a crying need for reform induced him to accept the archbishopric. His cathedral was a blackened mass of ruins, the monks of Canterbury

were relaxed to the point of being almost secularised, and both the spiritual and the material edifices needed rebuilding well-nigh from the foundations. Moreover, the king's half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, created Earl of Kent, had, on Stigand's deposition, appropriated the revenues of the see, and was in possession of twenty-five different estates belonging to it, as fiefs of his earldom. Supported by William, Lanfranc succeeded in compelling Odo to restore the misappropriations.

No less energetic was his action, when Thomas of Bayeux, the newly-elected archbishop of York, refused to render him canonical obedience. Lanfranc declined to consecrate him unless he acknowledged that Canterbury had precedence over York. The question being brought before the king in council, it was agreed that Lanfranc should consecrate him conditionally, pending the appeal of both to the Pope. Accordingly, the following year the two archbishops proceeded to Rome to receive their respective pallia, and to plead the cause in dispute. Alexander II. received Lanfranc, who had been his master, with great honour and affection, rising to greet him with respect, and declaring that he had learned from him all that he knew. Lanfranc on his part took occasion to express his faith in the Pope as the successor of St Peter, expressing himself in these words: "Of truth it is engraved in the consciences of all Christians that Christ gave nothing less to His successors than He gave to St Peter." From which he argued that a dispensation in all ecclesiastical affairs was valid when it had been approved by the judgment of the successors of blessed Peter. With regard to the point at issue between the two archbishops, the Pope decreed that the matter should be investigated in England, where the rival claims of Canterbury and York could be better understood and decided. On the return, therefore, of the archbishops, the cause was brought before the Witan,

and the primacy of Canterbury was acknowledged and confirmed.

In spite of some injustice and oppression inseparable from conquest, the action both of William I. politically, and of Lanfranc spiritually, was on the whole beneficial. Religious houses were reformed and foreign abbots were introduced, who enforced the observance of the rule. The great influx of Normans into the country was indeed considered a grievance, but in the end the reception of new blood into the body politic, social and religious, did far more good than harm.

Lanfranc outlived the Conqueror, and was called upon to crown his son, the Red King, William II., who, on account of his lawlessness, his brutally dissolute life, his vindictive and despotic character, was not accepted by the English without a struggle. Nevertheless, so long as Lanfranc lived, the aged and venerable prelate was enabled to hold somewhat in check the king's evil propensities, but on his death in 1089 they broke out in unrestrained and reckless violence. Having exhausted the riches of his father's exchequer, the second William had recourse to plunder, and the see of Canterbury, together with many other bishoprics, remained vacant, in order that he might squander their revenues in debauchery. But he was overtaken by a dangerous illness, and fear effected that which no remonstrances had been able to bring about.

St Anselm, who succeeded Lanfranc as Abbot of Bec, happened to be in England on business connected with his Order. For some time past the clergy and barons had urged the king to nominate him for the vacant archbishopric, it being impossible to find a more worthy successor to Lanfranc. "We do not know a holier man than Anselm," they pleaded; "he loves none but God; it is clear that his heart is set on nothing here below." But the king had always answered with a sneer, accompanied with his

favourite oath. Now, however, thinking that his wild, unscrupulous life was coming to an end, he allowed himself to be persuaded to atone for his sins, by restoring peace and order to the oppressed Church. He assented to the demands of the bishops, and Anselm, who had persistently refused to accept the onerous office of archbishop, was dragged to the king's bedside, where the crozier was forced into his unwilling hands. He was then carried off forcibly to the church, in spite of all his expostulations. "I tell you," he cried, "the king's sickness is not unto death; you are yoking to the plough a poor weak sheep with an untamed bull. The plough is the Church; it was drawn in England by two stout oxen, the king and the archbishop of Canterbury, the king with secular justice and rule, the archbishop with divine instruction and spiritual government. The present king has shown the ferocity of a wild bull, and you want to yoke me, a feeble sheep, with him. He will crush me, and the Church will fall again into widowhood with her pastor still alive."

The words were prophetic. William speedily recovered, and the anticipated struggle began at once. The first principle involved related to the restoration of lands belonging to the see of Canterbury, and which the king had seized. Anselm refused to be consecrated rather than submit to the spoliation of the Church, and the great barons brought immense pressure to bear upon the tyrant, who, driven into a corner, restored the temporalities of Canterbury forthwith. But in consequence of his defeat, his hatred of Anselm was deep and lasting, and he took care to thwart him in every act of his archiepiscopal office. When in due course Anselm announced his intention of going to Rome for his pallium, William Rufus, who chose to acknowledge the antipope, set up by the emperor Henry II., under the title of Clement V., and knowing that the archbishop recognised Urban as the rightful successor of St Peter, flew into a violent

rage, and declared that it was treason to call any man pope in his realm without the royal licence. An ecclesiastical council was therefore held at Rockingham for the purpose of deciding how far obedience was due to the king in this respect. Gundulf of Rochester was the only one of the bishops who had sufficient courage to stand by the archbishop, although they all acknowledged that Anselm's cause "rested on the Word of God and the authority of blessed Peter." The barons, more conscientious, declared boldly, "He is our archbishop, and to him pertains the rule of Christianity in this realm, so that we cannot while we live here as Christians refuse his guidance." But on account of the pusillanimity of the bishops, no conclusion was arrived at, and Anselm could only reiterate his determination to betake himself to "the Chief Pastor, the Angel of Great Counsel," to whom Christ had said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church." "But wherein," he continued, "we must be subject to earthly princes, and serve them, the same Angel of Great Counsel teaches and instructs us, saying, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' Wherefore let all know that in the things of God I will render obedience to the Vicar of blessed Peter; in the things which belong to the earthly dignity of my lord the king I will give faithful counsel and assistance according to my power." He again asked leave to go to Rome, but the king would by no means consent. However, in the midst of the discussion William Rufus entirely changed his tactics; he veered round, and with startling suddenness acknowledged Urban II. as Pope.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHURCH AND THE SONS OF THE CONQUEROR

WILLIAM II. was as cunning as he was tyrannical and unprincipled. He cared little or nothing as to who was the legitimate successor of St Peter, his whole aim being to grind the Church under his heel, and to become master of as much Church property as he could with impunity seize. The change in his tactics prompting him to acknowledge Urban was the result of a deeply laid scheme for getting rid of Anselm, who he foresaw would always continue to oppose every fresh attack on ecclesiastical rights and immunities. Accordingly, the king despatched envoys to the Pope, suggesting that he should send the pallium to the archbishop, in the hope that if Urban consented to this, the royal messengers would succeed in delivering it first to himself, and that he might then give it to whom he would. Happily Urban did not fall into this trap, but entrusted the sacred symbol of jurisdiction to Cardinal Walter, Bishop of Albano, with instructions to carry it straight to Anselm. On landing, however, the legate was hurried by the king's messengers through Canterbury to London, without being allowed even to see the archbishop. William, thinking that his trickery had been successful, caused Urban to be proclaimed Pope throughout the realm, and in return, demanded of the legate the deposition of Anselm, promising a large subsidy in money to the Pope as a reward for his complaisance. Needless to say, the bribe was emphatically refused by the Cardinal on behalf of the Pope, and the Red King, who now found himself in a dilemma, saw that

there was no way out of it but by making peace, at least temporarily, with the hated archbishop. If Anselm would only seek to propitiate him with a handsome gift of money out of the archiepiscopal coffers, and consent to receive the pallium from the king's hands, all might yet be well. If Anselm had yielded he would have given away the whole principle of investiture and jurisdiction, which in the event would have been bestowed by the king instead of the Pope. And this it was at which William Rufus was aiming. But he failed signally; Anselm was not to be cajoled, and the king dissembling his mortification as best he might, was obliged to yield the entire point.

The legate then went to Canterbury, carrying the pallium in a costly silver casket. As he approached the cathedral, the archbishop came out to meet him, accompanied by his suffragan bishops, and arrayed in full pontificals. The pallium borne in procession was placed on the high altar, and Anselm, first reverently putting off his sandals, took it himself with visible emotion from the altar, "as if," says the chronicler, "from the hands of St Peter."¹ The archbishop had triumphed, and William hated him more vehemently than ever, and took every opportunity of pillaging the see of Canterbury. At length, worn out with the long continuance of the struggle to defend the independence of the Church, Anselm asked leave to go to Rome, there to seek counsel in his many perplexities. William not only returned a prompt refusal, but tried to extract a promise from him never to appeal to the Pope on any pretext whatever, threatening that if the archbishop dared to leave the country, his rights would never more be recognised, and the property belonging to his see would immediately be confiscated. Timid as Anselm was by temperament, his courage ever rose high when a principle was at stake. His reply, however, is not only characteristic

¹ Eadmer, 31-34.

of the man; it describes the attitude of mediæval England towards the oppressors of the Church. "You call upon me to swear," he protested, "never to appeal in England to blessed Peter or his Vicar; this is a command unworthy of you, who are a Christian, for to swear this is to abjure blessed Peter. He who abjures Peter, undoubtedly abjures Christ, who made him prince over His Church." This answer was not altogether without effect upon the king, for Anselm having quitted the council, soon returned, and seating himself with a smile, said: "I am going, my lord, and not knowing when I shall see you again, I will give you my blessing, if you have no objection." William answered that he had none, and bowed his head, upon which Anselm rose, blessed him, and departed to Canterbury to make preparation for his journey. Dressed as a pilgrim, with scrip and staff, he took leave of his monks and the weeping crowd, and before he was half-way to Rome William had begun the confiscation of the archiepiscopal property.

In Rome, where he was pursued by the king's enmity, trials still awaited him, but Urban surrounded the archbishop with every sign of love and respect. Anselm spent most of his time in the pursuit of his former studies, and completed his famous treatise on the Incarnation. He was present at the Council of Bari, presided over by the Pope in person, and at the express invitation of Urban, addressed the hundred and twenty-three bishops there assembled. The subject under discussion was the Double Procession of the Holy Ghost, and Anselm spoke with so much learning and eloquence, that the Greeks were completely silenced, and their doctrine was condemned by the whole Council.

It was owing to Anselm's earnest supplication that, when the enormities of William Rufus came up for censure, the Pope refrained from excommunicating him. Nevertheless, his persecution of the archbishop

was relentless. On one occasion, when Anselm sent a letter to the king, Rufus, discovering the messenger to be a vassal of the archbishop, bade him begone, threatening with an oath that he would tear out his eyes unless he at once quitted the country. The only grievance alleged by the king against Anselm was the archbishop's visit to Rome. Soon afterwards Anselm left the Holy City and retired to Lyons, awaiting the time when circumstances might permit of his return to his flock. It came with appalling significance in the year 1100, when William met his sudden and unprovided death in the New Forest, an end that strangely befitted his reckless and ferocious career. Shot through the heart by an arrow from an unknown hand, he died without shrift, apparently without time for repentance, and was buried without a religious rite. Not a prayer was said over his grave, not a bell was tolled, no alms were distributed for the good of his soul, not a tear fell from any eyes save those of the persecuted archbishop, who, when the news reached him, sobbed bitterly as he moaned : "Oh that I had died in his stead !"

Henry, the Conqueror's youngest son, now succeeded to the throne of England. Anselm was recalled from his place of exile, and the new king swore that he would make the Church of God free, abolish the unjust customs that had disgraced his brother's reign, and fill up all vacant sees without delay.¹ But not many days later difficulties again arose on the subject of investiture, a matter that disturbed the peace of Europe throughout the Middle Ages. It had hitherto been the custom for kings not merely to nominate bishops, but also to invest them with the episcopal ring and crozier, which are symbols of spiritual authority. So long as there was a good understanding between pope and monarch, the inconvenience of this proceeding was not apparent. No dispute had as yet arisen as to the divided allegiance tendered by

¹ Wilkins, I., p. 394.

bishops, and it was clear that they did homage to the temporal sovereign for their temporalities, to the Pope for their spiritualities. But when kings grew greedy, tyrannical and aggressive, like the German emperors and the Norman kings, the case was changed, and the council of Clermont passed a decree in 1095, forbidding the investiture of ecclesiastics by laymen, for the reason that it led to the danger of placing the duty and conscience of Christian bishops under the heel of temporal sovereigns. Already in 869 the General Council of Constantinople had condemned lay nominations, and St Gregory VII. decreed the excommunication of any prince daring to exercise the right of investiture, as well as that of any prelate who consented to receive it from him.

When Henry I. recalled St Anselm he required him to do homage to him for the restitution of his temporalities. This act of homage had also been forbidden by recent councils, and Anselm was obliged to refuse it. However, after much negotiation, Urban's successor, Pope Paschal II., gave way on the question of homage, and allowed ecclesiastics to swear fealty to the sovereign as their temporal lord. At the same time he firmly refused to concede to the king the right of investiture, and Henry being obdurate, once more Anselm was forced into exile. He went to Rome at the request indeed of Henry, to lay the whole controversy before the Pope, but the king gave him to understand that he was not to return to England unless he brought with him a decision favourable to the royal demands.

The Pope refused to concede anything further in the matter, and showed the impossibility of a layman conferring spiritual authority. The archbishop therefore retired to his old monastery at Bec, and Henry confiscated the property of his see. But when threatened with excommunication for certain other high-handed acts against the Church, the king had recourse to compromise. He went to Bec, and in

a friendly interview with the archbishop, agreed to relinquish the right of investiture and nomination of bishops, provided that every priest should pay homage and swear fealty to him before receiving the temporalities of his office. After consenting to this, Anselm was allowed to return to Canterbury, where he died April 11th, 1109. Henry kept the see of Canterbury vacant for five years, during which time he appropriated its revenues.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT WAS PETER PENCE? WAS ENGLAND PAPAL IN THE MIDDLE AGES?

NOT one of the Anglo-Saxon kings is so completely identified with the nation as Alfred the Great. We are justly proud of his talents, and of all that he did to increase the civilisation and prosperity of the country. We look back to him as to one of the most gifted and enlightened men of his time. The historian Asser relates that when Alfred was a child his father Ethelwulf sent him to Rome, and that Pope Leo IV. in a manner adopted him and anointed him king. Then Ethelwulf went himself to Rome, and before leaving, agreed to pay a yearly tax to the "Pope Universal." Part of this tax was employed in contributing to the honour of St Peter in furnishing lights for the basilica, &c., and part of it was expended on the church of St Paul in like manner. This may be said to be the origin of Peter Pence. William of Malmesbury says that Ethelwulf offered to God and to St Peter an annual tax of a penny to be levied on each householder in England whose chattels were valued above thirty pence. But in much earlier times a certain sum was sent yearly to Rome for the purpose of maintaining the group of Anglo-Saxon institutions that had grown up there, our forefathers desiring to profit to the utmost by the advantage of study and occasional residence at the fountain-head of Christianity. Later on, again, in a letter addressed to his people in 1031, King Cnut alludes to "what we owe St Peter." As the Church spread and developed, the need for a tax such as Peter Pence became more and

more evident. William the Conqueror was willing not only that it should be levied, but to pay up the arrears into which it had fallen.

As time went on, the cupidity, tyranny and reckless extravagance of kings caused the collecting and transmission of the tax to be accompanied with much scandal. Added to this, many abuses in the administration of ecclesiastical funds crept in, resulting in great discontent. Other taxes were laid by the Pope on clergy and people, and the temporal affairs of the Church in England became the subject of much bitter complaint. But this did not interfere with the spiritual relations between England and Rome, and at the Council of Lyons, held in 1245, at the very moment when the Church in England was protesting against over-taxation, she opened her case with these words: "Our mother, the Roman Church, we cherish and love with all our hearts, as we ought, and we aim at the increase of her honour with all possible affection. To her we are morally bound to have recourse at seasonable times, that the filial grief which weighs upon us may be relieved by a mother's care." The continual payment of Peter Pence was then alluded to as a proof of the close ties that had always united England to Rome.

In the reign of Edward III., when the country was at its lowest financial ebb, owing to the king's ruinous wars, and when it was depressed socially by the terrible ravages of the disease known as the Black Death, the people still contributed regularly to Peter Pence, although added to the above-named troubles was the irritation caused by the Pope persistently appointing foreigners to English benefices. At last, however, the misery in England became so great that for fifteen years the nation was unable to pay the tax, or to meet the further demands for the support of the papal court. Nevertheless the English people never confused the obedience due to the Sovereign Pontiff in his capacity of Supreme Pastor with the protest

that might be permitted in dealing with him concerning temporalities. Edward's celebrated saying that His Holiness was set to *feed* not to *shear* the sheep is an illustration of the king's belief in the divine institution of the Papacy, as well as a protest against undue taxation. When the Commons prayed the king to complain to the Pope of the detriment to the Church that was occasioned by the appointment of aliens to English bishoprics, Edward was urged to bring before the Holy Father, "who is Sovereign Governor of Holy Church on earth," "the mischiefs and defects" which they desire should be remedied. The grievances complained of were real grievances in many ways, but it must be admitted that when foreigners ceased to be appointed to University livings, learning declined in this country.

But again and again throughout the Middle Ages we find bishops and clergy, together with the Universities, "prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, in prayers with tears," beseeching the Pope "to remember the fervour of the Anglican faith, and that the same kingdom has been specially devoted to the Roman Church." Abbots and priors describe the Church in England as being "a special member of the holy Roman Church." In 1247 the whole baronage of England, petitioning the Apostolic See, beseech her as their mother to cherish her own children, while the king says that "He who knows all knows that we have always our mother, the Roman Church, in the bowels of sincere affection," and he goes on to say that he has recourse to her "as a son to his mother."

In 1427 the University of Oxford wrote to Martin V., acknowledging him as "true head in the body of the militant Church," confessing him as "the one Supreme Pontiff and Vicar of Christ, and most true successor of St Peter," and they describe themselves "as with bended knees prostrate in all obedience at the feet of your Holiness."

Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, in his famous letter to Pope Innocent, refers to himself as an obedient subject of the Apostolic See, and says, "I obey as a son with all devotion and reverence Apostolic mandates." Appeals to Rome being frequent in the Middle Ages, Justice Bracton, in his *Laws and Constitutions of England*, says: "Concerning the jurisdiction of superior and inferior courts, it is to be noted, in the first place, that as the Lord Pope has ordinary jurisdiction over all in spirituals, so the king has in this realm in temporals." And again, "To the Pope and the priesthood belong spiritual things, to the king and the kingdom temporal things; and it is written, 'The heaven of heavens is the Lord's, but the earth He has given to the children of men.' Hence the Pope has nothing to do with the disposition of temporal affairs any more than kings and princes have with spiritual, lest either should put his sickle into the other's harvest. And as the Pope can ordain in the spiritual sphere concerning orders and dignities, so also can the king in temporals concerning grants of inheritance and assignments of heirs."

Mediæval England was papal to the core, and entirely one in doctrine with the universal Church, the centre of which is Rome. The faith which she had received on the authority of the Pope she kept for the same reason, not because such and such a doctrine was taught by the primitive Church, or because the eyes of private judgment seemed to discern it in the Bible, but because she listened to the living voice of authority, which echoes through the ages from St Peter to Pius X., and onwards to the consummation of all things.

When in 1413 Sir John Oldcastle was prosecuted for heresy, he was accused in his indictment "of thinking, dogmatising and teaching concerning the Sacrament of the Altar and of Penance," &c., *otherwise than the Roman and universal Church teaches and affirms.*

CHAPTER XV

THE CHURCH AND THE NATION

ST ANSELM died, as we have seen, in 1109, and for five years after his death there was no archbishop of Canterbury, the king refusing to nominate a successor, and appropriating the revenues of the archbishopric to his own uses. But on the 17th May 1114 Ralph d'Escures, a Norman ecclesiastic, was appointed, and during his rule and that of his successor, William of Corbeil, much was done towards putting the domestic affairs of the Church in order, the struggle in which the two former archbishops had been engaged having prevented the due exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. A papal legate was despatched to England to settle once for all the differences between Canterbury and York. In his capacity of papal envoy he took precedence of the Primate, and as he was a simple priest, this naturally led to some inconvenience and dispute, the result being that the Pope invested the archbishop and his successors with the dignity of *legatus natus*. The privilege remained attached to the see of Canterbury until the Reformation, the Pope reserving to himself the right, when he deemed it expedient, of sending an ambassador-extraordinary, who was called *legatus a latere*. The permanent residence of a papal legate in England formed another link binding the nation to Rome.

Among the ecclesiastical acts that took place in the reign of Henry I. was the increase in the number of bishoprics. The Pope erected the Abbey of Ely, which owed its existence mainly to St Anselm, into

an Episcopal Church, and it became one of the greatest and wealthiest of English bishoprics. Carlisle was also at that time made an episcopal see. The famous reform of the Benedictine Order, established at Citeaux, in France, was introduced into England by the monk St Stephen Harding. Fountains Abbey, near Ripon, was one of the grandest Cistercian houses in this country, the picturesque ruins of which may still be seen.

While religious life was confined within stricter limits and rules, the secular clergy were recalled to a former discipline from which they had become relaxed, and the ecclesiastical canons forbidding them to marry were again more strenuously enforced. Various regulations were made with regard to the careful and solemn administration of the sacraments, and the Church in Scotland, which since the time of St Augustine had been incorporated with the Church in England, was declared henceforth solely dependent on the Holy See.

In 1139 Theobald, another Abbot of Bec, was chosen to fill the vacant see of Canterbury, and in the same year Pope Innocent II. held a synod in Rome, at which Archbishop Theobald, together with Simon, Bishop of Worcester, Roger, Bishop of Coventry, Robert, Bishop of Exeter, and Reynald, Abbot of Evesham, were present. Nine years later Theobald and three English bishops were present at the Council which Pope Eugenius III. held at Rheims. Nevertheless, although the Church in England had happily an opportunity for putting her house in order, it must not be supposed that she enjoyed more prosperity than the nation at large, which was plunged in the very depths of misery. Henry I. had died in 1135, having lost his only son in the wreck of *The White Ship*. He bequeathed the kingdom to his daughter Matilda, and caused the bishops and nobles to swear fealty to her, thus excluding William, the son of his eldest brother, Robert, Duke of Normandy, his next

male heir. Matilda was the widow of the Emperor Henry V., and the feudal barons not being very eager to swear allegiance to a woman, her father, to ensure their fidelity, betrothed her to Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, son of his most redoubtable enemy, hoping thus to secure his support for her claims. Henry had loved peace, but strife was to follow his death, and this very settlement of the succession was the beginning of many years of discord, another claimant to the throne springing up in the person of Stephen, Count of Blois, son of Henry's sister Adela, who lost no time in presenting himself.

Stephen was cordially received by the citizens of London, and as their voice had long been received as representative of the nation, when he swore to maintain peace and good government, even the friends of Matilda agreed that the crown should be placed on his head. He was, indeed, false to his oath, and at once began to play the despot, but when Matilda arrived to claim her inheritance, although she found partisans in the bishops, who had sworn to uphold her rights, and in many others who rallied to her standard through disgust at Stephen's conduct, she failed by her imperious temper to gain the hearts of any. The country was on her appearance given over to the horrors of civil war, and even when Matilda retired to Normandy, convinced of the hopelessness of her cause, Stephen was powerless to restore order or to make his authority respected. So intense was the misery inflicted by the ferocious and lawless barons on their vanquished foes, that the people declared piteously that "Christ and the saints slept," while disease and famine stalked through the land.¹ David, King of Scotland, crossed the border with his Picts and Scots, in defence of Matilda's cause, and these wreaked fearful havoc in the northern counties. The aged Thurstan, Archbishop of York, grieving bitterly over the calamities suffered by his spiritual

¹ William of Malmesbury, *Hist. Nov.*, Book I., 14-18.

children, unfurled the banners of St Peter, St Cuthbert, St John of Beverley, St Wilfrid of York, and had them fixed on a car that stood in the midst of the repelling host. For three days the afflicted people prayed and implored the mercy of God, after which the forces collected by Thurstan went forth to meet the foe, led by the Bishop of Durham. They withstood the advancing hordes so manfully, in spite of their overwhelming numbers, that these were completely repulsed and scattered in wild confusion.

In the south the Church saved the nation even more effectually. After the retirement of Matilda to Normandy, Stephen required the bishops to crown his son Eustace during his own lifetime, but they refused, on the plea that this could not be done without the Pope's sanction. When the case was represented to the Pope, he decided that, as Stephen had acquired the English crown not by right of inheritance, but by fraud, he could have no right to transmit it to his heirs. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was in fact the moral leader of the nation at this crisis, brought matters to a successful issue by proposing a treaty, whereby Stephen should retain the crown during his life, and that at his death it should pass to Matilda's son, Duke Henry of Anjou, grandson of Henry I. The death of Eustace, followed soon afterwards by that of Stephen, put an end to nineteen years of anarchy and chaos. Between the demise of the crown and the arrival of Duke Henry, Theobald acted as regent. Thomas à Becket, a young priest of his household, was the archbishop's right hand. "To the Church," said St Thomas à Becket in after years, "Henry owed his crown, and England her deliverance."

The new ruler arrived in England on December 19th, 1154, was at once unanimously proclaimed king, and was crowned and anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. But the most prominent figure at the coronation was the young cleric to

whom the archbishop had confided the mission of inviting Duke Henry to occupy the vacant throne. He was in high favour with Henry, who was not slow to recognise his talents and his merits, and to make use of them. He chose him as chancellor and bosom friend, and Becket's native refinement, wit, and the learning he had already acquired, shone out in vivid contrast to the king's strong coarse personality and restless devotion to business, from which he found recreation in rough horse-play. In one thing only they were alike : beneath a gay exterior, beneath the ready jest and the quick, vivacious response, beneath the surface sympathy of youth in all its brilliant colour and merry movement, lay in either a determined purpose, one day to be pitted against each other in mortal combat. Such characters develop slowly, but they are the history-makers of the world.

CHAPTER XVI

ST THOMAS À BECKET, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (1162-1170)

THE beginning of the reign of Henry II. was full of the promise of domestic peace and prosperity. The king, who was not only ruler of England, but Duke of Normandy, Count of Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Poitou, Duke of Aquitaine, and Lord of Brittany, had been invited to claim the crown by the ecclesiastical authorities, and was welcomed by them as the saviour of society. Moreover, an Englishman, the learned and pious Nicholas Breakspear, sat in the chair of St Peter under the title of Adrian IV., and all things seemed to smile upon the English Church.

But before long difficulties arose; a cloud of the size of a man's hand appeared on the horizon, the presage of a great storm that was to rage for years between the spiritual and secular power in England. Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, at a meeting held in his episcopal city, at which were present the king, his chancellor Thomas, Archbishop Theobald and other dignitaries, speaking of certain rights belonging to the Holy See, said: "Our Lord left two powers in the world, the spiritual and the material. The spiritual He conferred on the first pastor, that is, on St Peter the Apostle, and all his disciples and successors. Hence from the beginning the custom was implanted in the Church of God that the pastors of the holy Church of the said St Peter, Prince of the Apostles, should rightly govern as being vicars of the holy Church of God. Hence also the Roman Church, endowed by the apostleship of the said Prince of

the Apostles throughout the length and breadth of the world, has obtained so high and great a dignity as chief, so that no ecclesiastic can be deposed without his judgment and authority." And the bishop added: "In this way the Church was constituted from the earliest time; and that without the permission and confirmation of the said father (the Pope) it is not lawful for any lay person, not even a king, to bestow ecclesiastical privileges to churches."

This was sound Catholic doctrine, and contained no element of novelty or exaggeration, but it was thoroughly unpalatable to Henry, who, young as he then was (he was twenty-one at the time of his accession), was proud, overbearing and jealous of any limit to his kingly will. It has been said that his chancellor, Thomas à Becket, perhaps biassed by his affection for Henry, argued on the king's side against the Bishop of Chichester, but the contemporary documents relating to the question have been so much tampered with by those interested in trying to prove that the future martyr for the rights of the Church once thought differently, that there is little reliance to be placed on the statement. That there never was any real doubt in Becket's mind regarding the authority and jurisdiction of the Holy See is clearly shown by his conduct, when in 1152 Stephen had sought to have his son Eustace anointed king. On this occasion Thomas had hastened to Rome, and pleading that the papal claims had not been duly recognised by Stephen, prevailed on the Pope to forbid the coronation.

Thomas à Becket had been a member of Archbishop Theobald's household from his twenty-fourth year, and from that time "there was none dearer to the Archbishop than he." He is described as slight and pale, with dark hair, long nose and straightly-featured face, blithe of countenance, keen of thought, winning and lovable in conversation, frank of speech, but slightly stuttering when he conversed. He had

studied canon law at Bologna, and in the primate's circle he more than held his own among the brilliant scholars who composed it. Not least among these were the learned John of Salisbury and Roger of Pont l'Évêque, afterwards Archbishop of York. It was as Archdeacon of Canterbury, a title conferred on him by Theobald, that Becket became the king's chancellor. The magnificence of his way of life in this capacity, his splendid retinue, extravagant tastes, gorgeous apparel and almost boundless power, have been much dilated upon by historians, while less has been said about his generosity, his compassion for the poor, and the absolute stainlessness of his moral character. Much as he affected purple and fine linen in the days when he was called upon to uphold the dignity of the chancellorship, these were but the outer trappings of a life that was singularly pure and innocent. Moreover, while Becket was chancellor there was an end to the abuse of keeping bishoprics and abbeys vacant while their revenues went to fill the royal coffers, and we are told that "when he might have had all the churches and castles of the kingdom if he chose, since there was none to deny him, yet the greatness of his soul conquered his ambition."

Theobald died in 1161, hoping and praying that Thomas, the chancellor, would succeed him, a desire that testified to the primate's insight into character, and that was an echo of the king's own wish. Becket was, however, extremely unwilling to accept the charge, clearly foreseeing that Henry's ecclesiastical policy would be entirely opposed to his own duty of guarding the rights of the Church in England. He confided his view of the case to the king, and held out against all persuasion for more than a year, but Henry's dominant will, combined with the determination of the monks of Canterbury, at last prevailed, and he was consecrated archbishop on June 3rd, 1162, having been ordained priest the previous day. His

friend, the consecrating bishop, Henry of Winchester, said : " Dearest brother, you must now choose between the favour of your earthly and of your heavenly king." And the newly consecrated archbishop, kneeling before him with uplifted hands, replied : " By God's grace and strength I make my choice. Never for the love or favour of an earthly king will I forfeit the grace of the kingdom of heaven." How true he was to this resolution we shall presently see.

There was no hesitation as to the course Becket would pursue. He at once discarded his costly scarlet and fur robes, the sumptuous gold-woven mantle, and put on the sackcloth, the black cappa and the linen surplice of the Canons Regular of St Augustine. By Henry's request the Pope dispensed the Archbishop from a journey to Rome to solicit the pallium, and the sacred symbol of jurisdiction was sent to him, in order that there might be no delay in the exercise of his new and onerous functions.

If the king was more or less irritated by the penitential, mortified life which his former companion now led, it was not long before his bitter anger was aroused, for Becket resigned the chancellorship, " not now wishing to be in the royal court, but desiring to have leisure for prayers, and to superintend the business of the Church." Henry showed his displeasure by depriving him of his archdeaconry with its rich revenues, and when they next met it was with averted face on the part of the king. Thus was the way paved for that hostility which the king was to show towards the champion of ecclesiastical liberty at the first excuse for a rupture between them.

This rupture was in a great measure occasioned by Henry's complaint that the ecclesiastical courts took too lenient a view of crimes perpetrated by clerics, and that imprisonment for life in a monastery or exile was inadequate punishment for homicide. In the secular courts it was the custom under Henry II. to pluck out the eyes, lop off a foot or hand as punish-

ment for any great crime. Some recent writers on this period have permitted themselves to doubt that it was the king's intention to have all causes, lay and clerical, judged in the civil courts; but at all events the whole history of the quarrel between Henry and the archbishop shows that the great principle of the immunity of the Church from the control of the State was imperilled. St Thomas having pointed out that it was the privilege of clerics from ancient times to be tried in their own spiritual courts, and that neither mutilation nor branding of the body was known to those courts, went on to show that due provision was made for majesty and for clemency. If a cleric were once deprived, he ceased to be a cleric, and became a subject of the secular courts. So that if he again broke the law he would not be brought up for judgment in the ecclesiastical courts, but would be punished by the ordinary procedure of common secular law. Henry, then, abandoning this particular ground, removed the question to a plane of generalities, and asked whether the bishops would observe his "customs." With one exception they replied that they would, "saving their order." This was tantamount to a refusal, even without the assertion of the archbishop that the "customs" of the Church were of greater authority than any "customs" of the State. Henry was furious, rose hastily and left the council. Fear of the king prevented the bishops from continuing to stand by their metropolitan, and as it was represented to him that the Pope advised him for the sake of peace to do all in his power to conciliate Henry, Becket, sorely against his judgment, agreed at length to forego the obnoxious clause "saving my order." He had no sooner done so than he discovered that he had been deceived as to the Pope's advice.

Still unsatisfied, Henry caused sixteen rules or propositions to be drawn up, celebrated afterwards as the "Constitutions of Clarendon," in order that the matter

of the "customs of the kingdom" might be settled once for all. He extracted a promise from the primate that he would affix to them his sign-manual. But when these were read out, some of the articles proved to be so entirely subversive of all independent life, liberty and dignity in the Church, that the archbishop refused to sign them, and overwhelmed with grief at having been led into momentary error, he abstained as a self-imposed penance from saying Mass for forty days, until he had received absolution from the Pope.

Among the most trenchant of the articles composing the "Constitutions of Clarendon" were the following. If any controversy arose between clerics or between a cleric and a layman concerning tithes or advowsons, it was to be decided in the king's court. Criminal offences of clerics were first to be examined in the king's court. None of the king's men might be excommunicated without his consent. Appeals were to be made from dean to archdeacon, from archdeacon to bishop, from bishop to archbishop, and finally to the king. No appeal was to be made to the Pope without the king's leave. No bishop or priest was to leave the kingdom, whether summoned by the Pope or making appeal to him, or in any case, without the king's leave. All vacant benefices were to be in the king's custody, and his assent was to be required before elections were made to sees or priories. Well might Becket exclaim that if the archbishops consented to the clause against appeals to the Pope they would be guilty of perjury, since on receiving the pallium they took an oath to present themselves at the Holy See.

Henry then suddenly summoned the archbishop to a council at Northampton, wherein Becket was accused of high treason. Flight was the only way out of the immediate difficulty, and he escaped to France. Pope Alexander III. was then at Sens, and received him kindly, but for six years he was forced

to remain in exile, the king meanwhile subjecting him to much petty persecution and personal spite. But St Thomas held firm; it was better that Canterbury should remain without a pastor than that the larger interests of the Church should suffer. Henry was doing his best to lead the English Church into schism, and it behoved its metropolitan to keep it closely united to the centre of unity. "Who doubts that the Roman Church is the head of all the Churches, and the source of Christian doctrine?" he wrote during his exile. "Who is ignorant that to Peter were given the keys of the kingdom of Heaven? In the faith and teaching of Peter doth not the structure of the whole Church rise, until we all attain in Christ unto the perfect man, unto the unity of faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God? . . . Whosoever he be who waters or who plants, God giveth to no one increase save to him who shall plant in the faith of Peter, and acquiesce in his teaching."

At length, driven by reverses of fortune, Henry was forced to come to terms, at least outwardly, with the Church. A meeting took place between himself, the King of France and the Archbishop of Canterbury on the borders of Touraine, and although Henry refused to give his former friend the kiss of peace, he made restitution to the see of Canterbury for all the injuries it had sustained in the quarrel, and promised to allow the Pope's excommunication of those bishops who had been faithless to their duty to be published in England. Becket was now free to return, and the Pope urged him to make no delay. "I go to England," he said, "whether to peace or to destruction I know not, but God has decreed what fate awaits me."

He was received by the Kentishmen with every demonstration of joy on landing, and he entered his episcopal city amid welcoming acclamations. The next day the excommunicated bishops sent to ask

for release from censure. Becket referred them to the Pope. But they carried their grievance to the king, who in a sudden burst of fury exclaimed: "Of all the cowards who eat my bread will none free me from this upstart clerk?" Four knights,¹ hearing this outbreak of wrath, travelled in hot haste to Canterbury, and slew the archbishop in the Cathedral. While Henry in France was plotting his ruin, St Thomas had won his long-looked-for crown of martyrdom.

¹ Reginald Fitzurse, William de Traci, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito.

CHAPTER XVII

ST HUGH, BISHOP OF LINCOLN

STRANGE to say, the murder of St Thomas of Canterbury revealed nobler qualities in Henry II. than he had ever before seemed to possess. He showed that he was capable of a great repentance, but for days after the news reached him of Becket's brutal assassination, his despair was so overwhelming that those who surrounded him feared for his reason. When he had partially recovered from the shock, he at once proceeded to do penance at the tomb of the martyr. This tomb became so famous throughout Europe for the miracles which took place there, that it was the object of vast numbers of pilgrimages from all parts of the continent up to the eve of the Reformation.

Henry having caused himself to be scourged at the hands of the Bishop of London, and by the monks of Canterbury, commanded the bishop to speak in his name to the assembled crowds, and to protest that he had never planned or desired the primate's death, though he confessed to having brought it about by his passionate words. The Pope, through his legates, had already required of the king certain conditions as the price of his absolution. One of these conditions was the revocation of the "Constitutions of Clarendon," the centre of the quarrel between himself and the Archbishop. But besides this, Henry having made a vow to visit the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, which he found impossible to accomplish, the Pope dispensed him from it, on his promise to found and build three

religious houses, two of which were to be Carthusian monasteries—one in England and one in Touraine. Both these conditions are significant, the acceptance of the first by Henry being a virtual acknowledgment of the justice of the cause in which St Thomas had suffered, the second as connecting Henry with the great Carthusian, St Hugh of Lincoln, who succeeded in bringing out the latent good in the king's character, and in correcting much of the evil.

The struggle in which St Hugh was engaged was often very like that which had embittered the life of St Thomas of Canterbury, but Hugh's methods of dealing with the king were nearly always successful, whereas the line which Becket had been forced to take invariably produced violence on Henry's part. We might almost say that the extreme sweetness of St Hugh's disposition prevailed, where the sterner logic of the archbishop chronicled only failure, till his glorious martyrdom brought victory. Something must also be allowed for the softening effect of Henry's great repentance on a temperament that remained to the end impatient of all control.

Born in 1140 at the castle of Avalon in Dauphiné, St Hugh was sent at the age of seven to the Canons Regular of St Augustine, at Villard Benoist, near Grenoble, where, together with his father, who had been left a widower, he received the habit of a novice, and grew up in the midst of a community as renowned for its learning as for its fervour. Consecrated deacon at nineteen, he early began his apostolic work, and became famous as a preacher long before he put on the priesthood. Meanwhile, at work among the busy hum of men, he conceived a deep longing for religious solitude, and going once on a visit to the rocky desert of the Grande Chartreuse, which the sons of St Bruno had turned into a Mount Tabor, he fell in love with it at first sight. After many difficulties, the Canons Regular being persistent in their refusal to part with him, St Hugh secured the

object of his desire by flight, and in due course was clothed with the white habit of the Carthusians. The next seventeen years were passed in the sublime wilderness of the Grande Chartreuse, ten of which were years of complete solitude in the hermitage, which every Carthusian loves as an intrinsic part of his high vocation. In this life of silence, prayer, penance and contemplation, interspersed with manual labour, the saint made great strides on the road to perfection, fighting the good fight against world, flesh and devil, and coming forth out of it more than conqueror.

In 1173 he was made procurator of the monastery, his new duties requiring him again to come in contact with temporal affairs, to superintend the lay brothers and servants, and to entertain the frequent guests visiting the lower house, which was separated from the monastery proper by a cloister and a flight of steps. It was during this period that Henry II., in fulfilment of the conditions of absolution imposed by the Pope, founded the Carthusian monastery at Witham, in Somersetshire, "for the good of his soul and the souls of his predecessors and successors, and in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the blessed John the Baptist, and of all the saints." By his request a band of several monks proceeded in 1178 from the Grande Chartreuse to form the nucleus of the new foundation, but for a combination of reasons the community did not flourish, and the king, having heard of the great reputation for sanctity and also for administrative power of Hugh of Avalon, sent to beg that he might be dispatched to England forthwith. Upon the decision of his superiors hung momentous issues in the history of the Church in England. After much prayer and deliberation on the part of the monks, and in spite of their deep reluctance to lose so great a treasure, the saint was ordered to tear himself from his beloved desert, and to accompany Henry's ambassadors to England as Prior of Witham.

His monastery had, however, yet to be built, and although the king received him more than graciously, and was prolific in promises of help, it needed all St Hugh's tact, patience and perseverance to extract from him the necessary means. Some few remains of the first English Charterhouse are still to be seen in the town of Witham at the present day, and one of the two churches built there by St Hugh is in a state of good preservation.

Although Henry II. had solemnly repudiated the "Constitutions of Clarendon," he nevertheless often put them in practice by seizing the revenues of vacant bishoprics, whenever want of money or lust of power prompted him. But the Prior of Witham, to whom he had given his entire confidence, was never behindhand in resisting these abuses, and in administering reproofs, from which the ready wit and humour of the saint always removed the sting.

For six years St Hugh remained at the head of his monastery, leading the life of a perfect Carthusian, passing his time in prayer, study and meditation, and ministering duly to those who were placed under his care. Then, as the needs of the Church had torn him from the Grande Chartreuse, so the same needs wrenched him from Witham.

In 1186 the see of Lincoln had been practically vacant for nineteen years, with the exception of an interval of two years, from 1183 to 1185, when its bishop, William of Coutances, was translated to Rouen. The diocese was naturally in a deplorable condition, and an earthquake had completely destroyed the roof of the cathedral, which had been begun by St Paulinus. There were also great gaps in the walls, and the foundations were damaged. When, therefore, St Hugh, sorely against his will, was elected Bishop of Lincoln, a gigantic work lay before him.

Gothic architecture in all its beautiful symbolism was blossoming out into glorious churches all over Europe. When the round Norman arch, expressing

strength, solidity, almost fortification, ceased to interpret adequately the attitude of Christianity in a world that had escaped from barbarism, it was abandoned for more spiritual forms. It gradually sprang aloft, and developed arrow-like slenderness, darting skyward as if to pierce the heavens, yet having a firm basis on the earth. Such churches have been described as prayer in stone. The massive unadorned pillars, as we see them in Durham Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey, and many other churches, were now abandoned for more graceful shafts, which soared like the arches. Their capitals were delicately carved, and supported "the high embowèd roof." The way in which these churches were built was as wonderful as the fabric itself. Those were days of fervour, and devout clients of our Lady would assemble and help the workmen to hew stone and carry bricks and mortar. In that part of Lincoln cathedral known as the church of St Hugh, and which comprises three parts of the whole building, the saint himself worked as a labourer, and many of the stones which we see there to-day were placed in position by the bishop's own hands.

But although a bishop, with all a bishop's responsibility, St Hugh never ceased to be a Carthusian. Faithful to his old penances and mortification, he was devoted to the lepers, in whom he saw our Lord Himself, Who became as a leper and an outcast for the sake of us all. Those who were most cruelly and repulsively disfigured he would treat with the greatest courtesy and affection, embracing them heartily. One day his chancellor, to try whether there was any taint of pride in him, remonstrated with him, and objected that when St Martin kissed the lepers he healed them by his touch. But the bishop answered with deep humility, "The kisses of St Martin healed the bodies of the lepers, the kisses of the lepers heal my sick soul."¹ His kindness and charity to the

¹ *Roger of Wendover*, III., pp. 155-159. Knighton.

poor and suffering, his tender love of little children, his especial devotion to the reverent burying of the dead (he would interrupt journeys of the utmost importance in order to accompany a dead body to its last resting-place, or to sing the office of the dead), were not more conspicuous than his defence of ecclesiastical rights and immunities. He knew well that where the Church is not free from the bondage of the State, all else is in bondage. Thus he has been called "the hammer of kings," and Henry II., Richard I. and John all experienced his determined resistance to their tyranny. One example must suffice to show the manner of St Hugh's dealing with royal injustice and aggression. The poor had much to suffer throughout the Middle Ages from the king's foresters, who generally regarded his wild animals far more than his humble subjects, and who perpetrated frequent acts of cruelty in their preservation of the royal chase. The Bishop of Lincoln having excommunicated Henry's grand forester for an act of oppression committed against some of the tenants of the Church of Lincoln, the king, who regarded the excommunication as indirectly touching himself, fell into a violent passion on hearing of it. But after the first outburst of anger, he resolved to bide his time for publicly showing his displeasure. Soon afterwards a prebend of Lincoln fell vacant, and Henry claimed it for one of his lay friends. St Hugh, instead of granting the request, answered the king's messengers thus: "Tell the king that ecclesiastical benefices are not to be bestowed upon courtiers but upon ecclesiastics. Holy Scripture does not say that those who possess them are to be officials of the palace or of the treasury or of the exchequer, but only that they must be servants of the altar. My lord the king has plenty of other rewards for those in his employ; he has temporal gifts to give them in exchange for temporal service, and if he wishes to save his soul, he must allow the soldiers of the King of

kings to enjoy the revenues which they need, without seeking to despoil them." Henry was, of course, infuriated at the saint's attitude, but in a charming and humorous fashion St Hugh dispelled the king's anger, and won his heart without losing an inch of ground or sacrificing an iota of his dignity.¹

We will conclude this chapter with a brief vindication of St Hugh's loyalty to the Holy See, which has been so eagerly denied by the Anglican Canon Perry and others. The point referred to concerns one of those appeals to Rome which Professor Maitland shows to have been so frequent in the Middle Ages.²

Two poor orphans had been cruelly despoiled of their inheritance by a rich man named Jordan de Tarri, who, when summoned to appear before the Bishop of Lincoln, as the Pope's delegate, to answer for his offence, came accompanied by a crowd of influential supporters. These threatened the bishop with the king's vengeance and an attack on the city of Lincoln, unless he abandoned the case. So dangerous did his position appear to his advisers, that they urged him to proceed no further in his opposition to the powerful man, but St Hugh, after a few moments of recollection, told the accused that although he hoped to gain nothing by a struggle with him and his influential friends, yet he was determined, for the discharge of his own conscience, "to write to our sovereign lord the Pope, and tell him that you are the only man in this kingdom who dares to contest his jurisdiction, and that you alone are defying his authority."

Perhaps no stronger words than these were ever uttered as proof of papal authority and jurisdiction

¹ Together with many other interesting circumstances connected with the bishop's dealings with the Angevin kings, the story is to be found at length in *The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, by the Rev. Herbert Thurstan, S.J.

² See his articles in the *English Historical Review* for 1896 and 1897, also his *Roman Canon Law in the Church of England*, &c.

in England. They sufficed to conquer the despoiler of the two orphans, knowing as he did what weight St Hugh's report would have when it reached Rome. He made haste to come to terms with the plaintiffs, and was compelled by the Bishop of Lincoln to make full restitution.

CHAPTER XVIII

RICHARD OF DOVER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (1174-1184)—BALDWIN, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (1185-1190)—HUBERT WALTER, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (1193-1205)—THE CRUSADES—THE MONKS OF CANTERBURY AND THE CHURCH AT LAMBETH

ST THOMAS À BECKET was canonised before his successor was installed in the primacy, and Henry II. wrote penitently to Pope Alexander: "The realm of England is in your jurisdiction, and I am bound to you alone by feudal obligations." The king had been absolved from his sin,¹ but the consequences of it he could not escape, and the last six years of his life were years of bitterness and humiliation. Two of his sons were killed in arms against him. Of the two who remained, the one opposed him with fierce vindictiveness, the other, his dearly beloved son John, broke his father's heart by his treachery.

The new Archbishop of Canterbury was not a favourite with the king, who had protested against his election, but avoiding all possible disputes, Richard of Dover proceeded at once to Rome, and was consecrated by the Pope himself. There is little to relate concerning his administration of the primacy, which appears to have been uniformly prudent and wise. The most important of his acts as archbishop was the assembling of a provincial synod at Westminster,

¹ According to Giraldus Cambrensis, William de Tracy hurried to Exeter after the murder of St Thomas, and declared to the bishop of that place that Henry had forced him and his three companions to swear that they would kill the archbishop.

in which reforms touching the celibacy of the clergy were set on foot. This law had been considerably infringed during the general confusion of the Danish wars, and when the country had once more settled down, the marriage of priests, with which the country was to some extent familiarised, came gradually to be tolerated in remote districts, although always disapproved of and repeatedly denounced. Henceforth celibacy was again strictly enforced, and no marriages of those who were above the grade of sub-deacon were recognised.

During Richard's episcopate the Pope sent a legate to England, at the request of Henry II., to make another attempt to settle the vexed question of precedence between Canterbury and York.

Richard's successor, Archbishop Baldwin, is described by Giraldus as a well-educated man, but slow and sparing of speech, somewhat gloomy and timid of temperament, smooth spoken and rather lukewarm. He consecrated St Hugh to the bishopric of Lincoln in 1186, and the holy man, finding his diocese in a deplorable state after its long widowhood, appealed to him for priests who had been trained by the primate himself to help him in rooting out abuses, and who would support him in his efforts by their counsel and example.

Baldwin at once dispatched to Lincoln two of the most virtuous priests in England, who effectually seconded St Hugh in his noble work of reform.

In 1189 the Archbishop was called upon to place the crown on the head of Richard I. at Westminster Abbey, in the presence of the bishops and barons of England, the new king having previously asked for public absolution for the crime of having made war upon his father. At the moment of coronation, Richard swore a triple oath to do all in his power to secure peace to the Church and to all Christian people, to defend the property of each of his subjects, and to unite mercy and justice in the administration of the

laws, Baldwin solemnly adjuring him not to take upon himself the royal dignity unless he was prepared to keep these solemn promises faithfully.

The Crusades were at this time occupying to a large extent the mind of Christendom. Fierce and untutored as were the masses of the people, ambitious and undisciplined the hearts of kings, all were nevertheless accessible, to a degree unknown in gentler ages, to feelings of generous enthusiasm for the vital and fundamental principles of religion. Tender devotion to the Saviour of mankind, to His Passion and Death, and a consequent pious regard for the place of His temporary sepulture, were capable of bursting into fervent acts of zeal and self-sacrifice when that sacred spot was threatened. Accordingly, when Pope Urban II. sent forth Peter the Hermit to preach a Crusade against the Turks, who were in possession of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and who subjected devout pilgrims to this the most hallowed shrine in Christendom to every kind of cruelty and hardship, the nations rose as one man to the cry of *Dieu le veult !*

The second Crusade was preached by St Bernard, and although only partially successful, the combined armies, composed of nearly 200,000 men, under the leadership of the Emperor Conrad and the King of France, made a magnificent protest against the atrocities committed by the Crescent against the Cross.

Undaunted by failure, the Christian legions, fired to fresh efforts by the wrongs endured by their brethren in Palestine, reassembled in 1189, and Richard I., four months after his coronation, set out for Normandy to concert plans with the French king for a third Crusade. archbishop Baldwin threw himself with vigour into the movement, and preached the holy war with apostolic fervour throughout England and Wales. Not content with these labours, he even joined the Crusaders, and distinguished himself valiantly under

the walls of Acre, dying soon afterwards a victim to his zeal.

Brilliant as were his qualities, genuine as was his piety, Baldwin did not entirely escape the censure of his contemporaries. A monk of Eynsham, whose visions were much discussed throughout the thirteenth century, in describing the state of certain persons in purgatory, represents Baldwin as suffering very cruelly, for although he had lived a life of penance and of "meek conversation" as a Cistercian monk, with his elevation to the primacy, "the more he grew in the sight of the people, so much the more he fell and decreased in the sight of God." The visionary then accuses him of neglecting his episcopal duties, and of failing to correct the vices of his clergy, and says: "Unwisely he promoted full unworthy persons to benefices of the Church, and also he dreaded and was ashamed to execute the law for fear of displeasing the king, by whose favour he came to that dignity." Nevertheless, in spite of his grievous torments in purgatory, Baldwin, says the monk of Eynsham, still finds mercy by the intercession of St Thomas of Canterbury, by reason of his having taken part in the Crusade, and for the good work of founding a hospital for pilgrims, under the invocation of that glorious martyr.

In 1189 the Bishop of Salisbury, Hubert Walter, succeeded Baldwin in the primacy. A man of more than ordinary power, energy and statesman-like ability, he was not wanting in many of the qualities that go to make a great churchman, and whether he was in the northern province acting as papal legate, "desiring in everything to safeguard the authority and dignity of the most holy Roman See," or whether presiding over a synod in London to regulate the administration of the sacraments, and especially matters relating to the holy Eucharist, he was zealous in promoting the much-needed reform. His attention had been drawn to the great necessity for this by

St Hugh of Lincoln, and it would have been well if he had confined himself to the spiritual needs of his flock, but unfortunately his services were also enlisted on behalf of the king's temporal necessities, Richard I. commanding him to raise money for the prosecution of his foreign wars. In advocating an unconstitutional tax, which was to provide the king with the supplies he demanded, Hubert came into collision with St Hugh, who was uncompromising in his resistance to the royal aggression.

A further dispute, and one that threatened to entail serious consequences, was occasioned by what at first sight seems to have been but a simple act of devotion on the part of the archbishop. He had built at Lambeth a collegiate church, and caused it to be served by secular canons, under whom it flourished so rapidly that it bid fair soon to grow into a cathedral, rivalling Canterbury in importance. The matter was of far-reaching complication, the monks of Canterbury themselves regarding the new foundation as an encroachment on their ancient rights, and fearing lest it should contest the privilege, which they had always maintained, of electing the archbishop. Their grievance was well grounded, and if allowed to remain, would have dealt a fatal blow to the Church of Canterbury. The subject had come under discussion in the time of Baldwin, who had built a church in honour of St Thomas à Becket near Canterbury. The monks of Christ Church had appealed to the Pope, who, taking their view of the circumstance, had ordered Baldwin's edifice to be razed to the ground. On this second occasion they had recourse to the newly-elected Pope Innocent III., who, after duly examining the case, likewise ordered Hubert to destroy his church. But in the meanwhile the English bishops had assembled, and had drawn up a statement in Hubert's favour, which they thought advisable to lay before the Pope, petitioning for a stay of judgment pending further investigation.

Their letter began thus :—

“To our Reverend Father and Lord, Innocent, supreme Pontiff, the suffragans of the Church of Canterbury send greetings. We return thanks to the Giver of all good gifts, who in founding his Church upon Peter foretold that his brethren were to be confirmed in Peter, and in his successors through him. Hence, while we learned with distress of the decease of Celestine III. of happy memory, the news of your election which followed upon it has dispelled the cloud of our sadness, and brought back the longed-for sunshine. God has not left us orphans—He who has raised up sons in the place of their fathers, and Nazareens in the room of the saints. We rejoice in His goodness, that from your earliest years He has prepared you and endowed you for this sublime dignity in such a way that, after God, the welfare of the Church rests entirely upon you, and that those of her members who have grown sickly and diseased may, under this Innocent, whom Heaven has bestowed upon them, be restored to their former health, and become innocent of harm.”

After showing forth their reasons for a further inquiry into the matter, the bishops concluded their letter as follows :—

“It is for you then, most dear Father in Christ, to acquaint yourself with the true circumstances of the case, and then to decide as it shall seem to you expedient. Be assured that whatever you may determine will be carried out by the Lord Archbishop and by ourselves with loyal and devoted affection. And if your Holiness should think our testimony for any reason unconvincing, may it please you to commit to any others whom you may select the fuller investigation of the truth, and upon their report to pronounce and determine what your sublimity shall know to be the will of the Most High.”

This petition was seconded by the king, and by all the Cistercian abbots in England, who all spoke in favour of Hubert. Nevertheless, a new inquiry having been made, the Pope remained of the same opinion as before, and wrote these words to the archbishop, confirming his former verdict :—

“Let it not distress you, dear brother, if our conscience compels us to act as we have done. God is our witness

that we have been swayed by no motive of passion, but we have been guided simply by the duty which weighs upon us, despite our insufficiency to administer justice in such a way as to respect the rights of all. We bear to your fraternity a sincere affection, we look upon you as an honourable member of the episcopate, and as a firm pillar of the house of the Lord, but we cannot give a verdict in your favour without grievously offending the God who created us."

Hubert submitted, and caused the church he had built to be pulled down at his own expense ; but the king, less amenable, committed further aggressions on the rights and immunities of the Canterbury monks, while even Hubert was not fully reconciled to them, and propounded to the Pope a fresh version of his scheme, to which he still obstinately clung. This called forth consolatory letters addressed by Innocent to the monks, and in one letter he says : " Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we hold the place of Him who, in the language of the prophet, delivers the poor from oppression, and helps when there is none else to help. Full of paternal compassion for your troubles, we make no account of the power which has declared against you, and to put an end to the oppression under which you groan, we have unsheathed the sword of Peter, and intend that justice shall be done. The only reward we ask of you is that you will offer your prayers and your tears for us to the all-merciful Judge, that our sins may be remitted. Lift up to Him your pure hands, that we may exercise our apostolic functions to the praise and glory of His name, to the advantage of the Church, and to the profit and salvation of our own soul." ¹

Thus was the papal court not only the supreme court of appeal, but the Pope, besides being the judge, was the father and powerful protector of all who suffered injustice and oppression.

¹ *The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, edited by the Rev. Herbert Thurstan, S.J., p. 384. Apud Migne.

CHAPTER XIX

CARDINAL STEPHEN LANGTON, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (1207-1228)

AFTER the death of Richard I., John, "the worst outcome of the Angevin race," made his tenure of the English crown secure by the capture and murder of Arthur, Duke of Brittany, son of his brother Geoffrey. This conduct was of a piece with his conduct towards his father, his attempt to usurp the throne when Richard was king, and with his other acts of perjury, cowardice, irreverence and cruelty. To prevent any question as to his rightful sovereignty after Arthur's foul murder, he had himself crowned a second time at Canterbury by Archbishop Hubert, shortly before the death of the latter.

On Hubert's decease the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, proceeded to elect their sub-prior, Reginald, as his successor, and they despatched him to Rome to ask for the pallium. But they acted without the concurrence of the king and the suffragan bishops, therefore John, refusing to recognise Reginald's election, nominated the Bishop of Norwich. To him, however, the suffragans objected, and the matter was referred to the Pope. In the words of the Protestant Dean Hook, "King, Chapter, Hierarchy, all put themselves in the hands of Innocent, and in so doing recognised him as the legitimate arbiter in their disputes. They acknowledged him as the supreme authority, and referred to him as a judge from whom there was no appeal."

But in practice John utterly repudiated his theory and that of the whole Christian world. The Pope,

declaring both elections invalid, appointed Stephen Langton, a just, learned and upright ecclesiastic, whom he had had ample means of knowing thoroughly, having studied together with him at the University of Paris. On his election to the Papacy Innocent III. had summoned Langton to Rome, treated him with great liberality and kindness, and raised him to the Cardinalate in 1206. As Cardinal he lectured publicly in Rome with great success, the learned Pope being frequently one of his audience.

King John in an autograph letter congratulated Langton on his elevation, and it was perhaps this circumstance that suggested to Innocent his nomination to the see of Canterbury, for he parted with him reluctantly, "in order," says Dean Hook, "that the most important see in western Europe might be properly filled." The Pope consecrated him himself at Viterbo on June 17th, 1207, having first submitted his name to King John. But John persisted obstinately in upholding the election of his favourite, the Bishop of Norwich. He returned no answer to the Pope's conciliatory letters, and swore loudly that Langton should never set foot in England as primate. He threw the papal envoys into prison, and sending an armed body to Canterbury, drove the monks of Christ Church from their monastery and confiscated their lands and property. No means were omitted to bring the king to a more reasonable frame of mind, but when every other attempt failed, Innocent threatened him with an interdict if he continued to exclude Langton from his see. John replied defiantly that if the threat were carried out he would send every Italian in the realm back to Rome without eyes and nose. The Bishops of London, Worcester and Ely, who were entrusted with the publication of the interdict, implored him on their knees to admit the archbishop, but he swore a fearful oath, and ordered them to leave his presence if they valued life and limb. Then the blow fell upon the kingdom. The

sacrifice of the Mass ceased to be offered; no bell throughout the land invited the worshipper to praise and prayer. The churches were closed; the sacraments were alone administered to the newly born and to the dying. The dead were buried without priest or funeral rite, and in unconsecrated ground. The people were paralysed with fear. Not so the king, who retaliated by persecuting the clergy in every possible way.

Two years passed, and the Pope, after repeated efforts to bring John to a better mind and getting no sign of it, excommunicated him. But the king kept so careful a watch at all the seaports that the bull could not be brought in, and his theologians told him that until it was published it could have no effect. Most people frequented the court as usual, but one day the Archdeacon of Norwich remarked that it was unsafe for beneficed men to remain in the service of an excommunicated king, left the palace and returned home without asking the king's leave. John sent a troop of soldiers after him to arrest him, and he was cast into prison, heavily ironed. A few days later John sent him a cope or mantle of lead "to keep him warm," and thus, starved and weighed down by the crushing load, he died a martyr to religious principle and obedience to the Holy See.¹

Cut off from the pale of the Church, John turned to the Emir, Mohammed-al-Nasir, and promised to embrace the faith of Islam, giving up to the emir the crown of England if he would help him against the Pope. But the emir gave him no help, and after waiting for four years, Innocent had recourse to the last weapon in his power. By the exercise of his claim to deprive and depose unworthy kings as the earthly representative of the heavenly Monarch, by whom kings reign and princes rule, he released John's vassals from their oaths of fealty, and exhorted all Christian rulers to unite in dethroning the King of

¹ Wendover, III., pp. 228-230.

England. Then John ceased to scoff, rail and blaspheme, for the King of France immediately prepared to carry the Pope's sentence into effect by invading England. This gave John pause, for added to the certainty of invasion was the probability of a revolt of the barons, all of whom were conspiring against him, while the Welsh were already up in arms. Pushed into a corner, he agreed to receive Cardinal Langton, and to submit to the Pope's other conditions. These included the surrender of his kingdom, and accordingly, on the 13th May 1213, he solemnly placed in the hands of the papal legate Pandulph a charter, by the terms of which he resigned his crown and his realm to the Pope, receiving them back again to be held as fiefs of the Roman See. This charter was signed by the king himself, one archbishop, one bishop, nine earls and three barons. John then took an oath of fealty as the Pope's vassal, and promised a yearly tribute of a thousand marks for the kingdom of England and the lordship of Ireland.

This act of King John's has been a fertile source of scandal to Protestant writers, who, not understanding the state of the case between England and Rome in those days, have imagined a thrill of horror to have passed through the nation when its king acknowledged himself the vassal of the Pope. The truth is, as a learned modern writer has pointed out,¹ "England did not shudder, but rather approved. There was no disgrace in what John had done, according to the sentiments of the age, . . . for at that time people did believe in the Apostolic See; and they did not recoil from the notion of a kingdom being placed under the special protection of the Apostle Peter as its overlord." Moreover, most of the princes of Christendom were in the same position, and were even vassals one to another. The King of Scots, for instance, was vassal to the King of England, and the

¹ The Rev. Luke Rivington, *Rome and England, or Ecclesiastical Continuity*, p. 94.

King of England to the King of France for his possessions in that country. Henry II. acknowledged the Pope as his suzerain, while Richard I. resigned his crown to the Emperor of Germany, and held it on the payment of a yearly rent. The special points to be considered in John's surrender are—the motives which actuated the Pope in requiring it, the unanimous consent of the barons, and the political importance and result of the transaction.

First, as regards the Pope's intention. Even if the vindication of his authority was his first object, the welfare of England was firmly bound up in it, for John had by his perfidy, his cruelty, arrogance and misgovernment forfeited the obedience of Christian subjects. Innocent, in releasing them from their oaths of fealty, came to their aid at a moment of dire distress, supporting archbishops, barons and people against his tyranny. Secondly, in this sense, their point of view was precisely that of the Pope, and they fully concurred in John's act of resignation. The instrument which the king placed in Pandulph's hands contained these words: "By our free goodwill, and *by the common counsel of our barons*, we offer and freely grant to God and the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and the most holy Roman Church . . . the kingdom of England and Ireland." Thirdly, the immediate effect of John's becoming "the Pope's man" was the checkmating of the King of France, who thereupon broke up his army in dismay, while five hundred English ships under the Earl of Salisbury utterly destroyed the French fleet, which was to have harassed the English coasts. Thus, in becoming the vassal of the Pope, John had not only made his peace with the head of the Church, but in acknowledging the Pope as his temporal suzerain, he had at least temporarily saved the country from invasion, and if any disgrace attached to the act, as things were then constituted, it lay entirely in John's want of truth and sincerity. Cardinal Langton was indeed permitted to land, and

the bishops whom John had driven into exile were allowed to return, but all other promises were broken as soon as made, and the barons had bitter cause to complain of his lawlessness and bad faith. The primate took up their cause warmly, but the Pope was in a difficult position. According to feudal law the suzerain was bound to protect his vassal, and it was in this capacity of suzerain, not as spiritual ruler of Christendom, that Innocent now sided with the king against the barons. When these, under the influence of Langton, who did but carry on the tradition of resistance to royal aggression and despotism received from Anselm, Theobald, Becket and others, drew up the famous charter, the supposed basis of English liberties, the Pope condemned it, although it was in reality nothing but a more concise and practical exposition of the laws of Edward the Confessor.

Technically, of course, the barons were in the wrong, making themselves judges in their own cause, when in 1215 they forced the king at Runnymede to sign Magna Charta. Innocent was in consequence indignant that, instead of bringing their grievances before him as John's overlord in a court of appeal, they had recourse to armed violence, but his whole subsequent action shows that he was in nowise hostile to English freedom. On the plea that he had not been a free agent in signing the Great Charter, the craven king appealed to the Pope for protection against his subjects, repudiating all the oaths he had sworn. The barons retaliated by inviting Louis, eldest son of the King of France, to come over and take the crown from their perjured sovereign. But fortunately for the kingdom, in the midst of the horrors of a civil war John died, leaving his successor, a boy of nine years of age, to inherit the complications and difficulties which he had wantonly created.

CHAPTER XX

ST EDMUND RICH, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
(1234-1240)

CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP LANGTON had been suspended from his office as primate for his share in the revolt of the barons, but on the accession of the boy king, Henry III., he was allowed to resume the government of his see. He immediately returned to England, and busied himself during the remainder of his life with the much-needed reform of ecclesiastical abuses, setting many good works on foot. The task of dividing the Bible into chapters is said to have been his, while he made many important regulations concerning divine worship.

Meanwhile Louis, now King of France, invited by the barons to help them in their struggle against John, had landed in England, and ruled almost unopposed in the south. But for the Pope, Henry III. would scarcely have had a chance of reigning. Honorius, successor of Innocent III., who had died in 1216, constituted himself the guardian of the young orphan, and confided him to the care of the valiant earl marshal, William, Earl of Pembroke. The papal legate Gualo had him crowned at Gloucester, where Henry took the usual oaths, and one of fealty to the Pope as his suzerain. The next day he was proclaimed king, and an amnesty was offered to all who should come and do homage to him as their legitimate sovereign. At a council held at Bristol Magna Charta was ratified, whereupon Louis, finding that the barons were now inclined to support Henry, and that he himself could no longer count on their aid, made a

bold stroke for the crown of England at Lincoln. But being defeated here and in a decisive naval engagement by Hubert de Burgh, he was obliged to come to terms with the young king's representatives.

When Louis had vacated the realm, Henry was indeed sole king, but he would still have been in a sorry plight between conflicting parties but for the Pope's powerful protection. When Gualo went back to Rome, Honorius sent Pandulph to England to watch over his vassal's interests. Pandulph remained until he had restored peace on the Welsh borders, had negotiated a treaty between Scotland and England, had paved the way to a better understanding between England and France, and had caused Henry to be again crowned, some doubt having been thrown on his hurried coronation at Gloucester. When Alexander, King of Scotland, was married to Henry's sister at York, the mission of the papal legate was ended, and he returned to Rome.

Archbishop Langton died in 1228, and after some difficulties as to his successor, the Pope appointed Richard, chancellor of Lincoln, to the vacant see. He ruled it as primate for two years, when he died, and was succeeded by St Edmund of Abingdon, Canon of Salisbury, one of the most distinguished, learned and truly devout men of his time. Around him are grouped the principal events of this troubled period, and one may say that his history is the history of England for the time being.

Of lowly parentage, he was an ascetic and a student from his earliest childhood, while his winning gentleness and rare detachment from the things of this world pointed early to the attainment of a high degree of sanctity. It has been said that his name added more lustre to the University of Oxford than it conferred on him. He was mainly instrumental in reconstructing it after a period of storm and stress, during which many of the schools that had formerly been famous were now almost deserted.

When he came to Oxford, a boy of twelve years old, to pursue higher studies at a school belonging to the Abbey of Eynsham, where his father had embraced the religious life, it is strikingly told of him that, although he was perhaps not poorer than many of his fellow-students, his mother had nothing to give him but the hair-shirt, which he thenceforth wore every Wednesday. His education was continued at the University of Paris, and in 1227 his fame as a theologian was European. Gregory IX. appointed him one of the preachers of the sixth Crusade, and he afterwards became one of the most popular Oxford lecturers. Although a priest, he resolutely refused all the ecclesiastical preferments and benefices which Cardinal Langton offered him, but on the death of Langton's successor, his reluctance to fill the vacant see of Canterbury was overruled by the Pope.

Six years had elapsed, during which time various candidates had been put forward. Peter des Roches, chancellor of the realm, had proposed a creature of his own, who proved not to be acceptable to the monks, and they chose their prior. But the Pope disapproved of this choice, and having St Edmund in view, ordered them to elect him.¹

St Edmund had good reason to flinch from the burden that awaited him. Abuses were not only rife in the Church at large, but also in the cloister, where in many instances discipline was relaxed and fervour had grown cold. Foreigners, not always of the most exemplary lives, were being constantly presented by the Pope to English benefices, and the nation, already groaning under a heavy load of taxes, was frequently called upon to furnish large subsidies to relieve the necessities of the Holy See. This latter evil, with all its attendant indignities and scandals, arose mainly from the want of any concerted action on the part of the various countries of Christendom

¹ Wendover, IV., pp. 267-298.

in the matter of providing a settled income for the Pope. If each nation had agreed to contribute a fixed yearly sum, recognising that the Papacy, with its college of cardinals, its embassies to reigning sovereigns, its nunciatures, its missions to the heathen, its courts of appeal, and all the sundry departments necessary for the judicial settlement of ecclesiastical questions all over the world, could not be carried on without vast expenditure, many of the unseemly disputes that attended the levying of taxes at this period would have been avoided. But the nations of Europe were far too busy fighting each other to dream of any combined action, even in a common cause; and perhaps even had order reigned, the monarchical principle was still too undeveloped to render possible any such unison of minds. Moreover, the Holy See itself was far in advance of surrounding civilisation, and must lead the way in all forward movements. And meanwhile, besides being responsible for more than the already enumerated sources of expenditure, the sovereign Pontiffs were engaged in the costly enterprise of barring the onward march of the Turk, who threatened not only to exclude Christians from the holy places in the East, but to plant the Crescent in the very heart of Europe.

While the world was in this unsettled condition, it was not surprising that the Church should feel the reaction; but in England difficulties were increased tenfold by the greed, rapacity and aggression of the Angevin kings. Henry III. was just emerging from his long minority, when St Edmund was elected to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury. Notwithstanding the prevailing abuses, there was much in the outlook that seemed to promise well. The new primate had already brought his salutary influence to bear on the University of Oxford, and learning had also been revived at Cambridge. The Grey Friars, Friars Minor or Franciscans, as they

were indiscriminately called, arrived in England in 1221, and supplementing the labours of the parish priests, devoted their lives to the evangelisation of the teeming multitude. They were received with enthusiasm everywhere, and soon became familiar figures in the crowded haunts of fever, in the plague-stricken hovels and noisome lazaret-houses with which almost every large town abounded; the poorest quarters were fixed on as sites for their plain wooden houses, and wherever disease, misery and hunger stalked, there was the friar. He was to be found in the filthiest alleys, administering the consolations of religion to the sick and dying, preaching in the market-places to those who clustered round him in the intervals of business, suspending for a few moments their bartering and chaffering to listen to the words of eternal life.

In due course the Franciscans came to Oxford, not at first with any thought of studying, for, strictly speaking, it was forbidden to them by their rule of poverty to possess books, or even writing materials. No such embargo had been placed on the Dominicans, who had preceded them to Oxford by about two years, and whose lectures on theology and philosophy at once attracted attention. Gradually the sons of St Francis, seeking to alleviate the horrible sufferings of the lepers, were led to the cultivation of the physical sciences, and as their reputation for preaching grew, wishing to improve their diction, they had recourse to the study of logic and rhetoric. Once launched on the pursuit of knowledge, they did not rest until they had established a school at the University, which soon became renowned throughout Europe. They produced the most subtle doctors the world has known, and Adam Marsh, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus rendered the Franciscan Order as illustrious for scholastic learning as it was in the days of its first fervour for religious poverty and apostolic fervour.

The now flourishing condition of the universities tempted many foreigners to England for the purpose of study, while the king's marriage with Eleanor of Provence brought over a whole shoal of hungry aliens to fill the places that fell vacant at the council board and in the Church. Henry III., in his resentment at the hostile attitude of his barons towards him, threw himself so recklessly into the arms of these foreign place-seekers, who bid fair to oust every Englishman from participation in the government of both Church and State, that the primate addressed a strong remonstrance to him on the subject. Only the threat of excommunication induced him to part with his favourite, Peter des Roches, and his attendant swarm of unworthy advisers. Uncompromising as was the attitude of St Edmund in defence of the rights of both clergy and laity against the royal oppression, it was stultified by Henry's deeper diplomacy, and the primate was able to wring no further concession from the king.

The Pope, whose financial embarrassment was yet further increased by his struggle with the Emperor Frederick II., a struggle in which the most vital principles were at stake, was in urgent need of money. Although Henry wished to reserve to himself the privilege of levying tribute on the clergy, he thought he saw in the papal necessities a means of checkmating the primate, and he invited Gregory IX. to send a nuncio to England, who, for the time being, would be Edmund's ecclesiastical superior, and nullify his opposition to the royal measures.

In spite of the archbishop's protest, the legate was sent, and although he acted with discretion, St Edmund was, by the very fact of his presence, superseded, and his sentences were revoked. The obnoxious taxes were levied, the flood of Provençals continued to fill all the judicial and administrative posts, and the government of the country was

carried on by men ignorant of the first principles of English law and justice. St Edmund, forced by these adverse circumstances to tread the path of exile, took refuge within the peaceful walls of the Abbey of Pontigny, in France, where he died less than a year afterwards.

CHAPTER XXI

ROBERT GROSSETESTE, BISHOP OF LINCOLN
(1225-1253)

SINCE the death of St Hugh in the year 1200, the work of reform which he had so valiantly set on foot, and so indefatigably persevered in, had again been abandoned, and the diocese of Lincoln was an example of abuses. Pope and king were alike guilty of irregularities in dealing with this see, as indeed with all English benefices, and but for the stern, unflinching attitude of Bishop Grosseteste, things would have gone from bad to worse.

The king, for instance, might at any moment require the services and the presence of any cleric as minister, judge or ambassador, thus withdrawing him from his ecclesiastical duties, and utterly disregarding the spiritual nature and obligations of his calling. On the other hand, he would, as we have seen in the life of St Hugh, seek to thrust upon the diocese courtiers and royal favourites without any scruple as to their want of suitability or fitness. On this account Grosseteste soon came into collision with Henry III., who bade him appoint one of his civil servants to the cure of a church. The man, although in Holy Orders, held a secular post as forest justiciary, and the bishop refused point-blank to induct him, unless he first laid down his secular office. It has never occurred to any one to accuse Grosseteste of disloyalty for his opposition to the unjust demands of the king, and it would indeed be folly to suppose him capable of repudiating his obligation to obey the king in all things lawful, because he held it to be his duty as

shepherd of souls to resist a royal act of injustice detrimental to those souls. Rather would such resistance argue so great a delicacy of conscience that one would expect him scrupulously to render unto Cæsar the things that undoubtedly belonged to Cæsar. But in like manner as Grosseteste resisted the king, so did he resist the Pope, when Innocent IV. would have promoted to a prebend of Lincoln Cathedral his own nephew, a mere boy, whose youth and foreign tongue, without extenuating qualifications, made him unlikely to contribute to the spiritual welfare of the diocese. Although the Pope listened to the objections expressed by the bishop, and withdrew his nominee, accepting Grosseteste's reasons as sufficient, some Protestant writers have professed to see in the incident a reaction against Roman supremacy, and a revolt on the part of the English bishop against papal claims. In the same way they have interpreted all the relations between England and the Papacy in mediæval times. To complain of a tax is to be credited by these writers with denying in principle the supremacy of the Apostolic See,¹ the inference being as absurd as it would be to accuse Grosseteste of disloyalty to the king in his resistance to the royal attempt to foist another unsuitable candidate upon the diocese. And it is not too much to say that all his intentions and acts were in perfect harmony with those of his illustrious predecessor, St Hugh, with those of St Edmund of Canterbury, of St Thomas à Becket, and all those English bishops and archbishops whose devotion to the Holy See has never been called in question. This, his own words, go far to show in the very letter which he wrote to the papal nuncio refusing to induct the Pope's nephew. In it he says: "To the most holy Apostolic See all power has been entrusted for edification, not destruction, by the Holy of Holies, our Lord Jesus Christ." And as a proof that in all things legitimate he was prepared to obey the Pope's

¹ The Rev. Luke Rivington, *Rome and England*, p. 90.

mandate, he says in another letter : "To the holy Roman Church is due from every son of the Church the most devoted obedience, the most reverential veneration, the most fervent love, the most submissive fear." "This Church," he further declares, "is to the universal Church what the sun is to the heavens—so does our Lord the Pope manifest his presence ; for in comparison to him all other prelates are like the moon and stars, receiving from him whatever power they possess to illuminate and cherish the Church."

The Popes were themselves anxious, amid all their multifarious cares during this agitated period, to find a remedy for the abuse of provisions in the Church in England. Innocent IV. was especially solicitous in this regard, as his correspondence with Grosseteste abundantly shows ; and if by reason of the troubled times innumerable scandals continued to disgrace the Church, the Bishop of Lincoln did not for a moment confuse such issues as the spiritual supremacy of the Pope and his jurisdiction over the Church of England with the faulty administration of temporalities which was so often the subject of irritation and complaint. "No one," says Mr. Luard, in his learned edition of the Bishop of Lincoln's *Letters*, "can exceed Grosseteste in his reverence for the papal power, and for Innocent IV. in particular." Moreover, Grosseteste stood by no means alone in his bearing towards the Holy See, although few of his contemporaries equalled him in that absolute fearlessness, honesty of purpose and sanctity so nearly approaching to the heroic, which have almost won for him the crowning honour of canonisation.

In 1245 the English clergy in Convocation stated that it was accounted among the glories of the English Church to be a special member of the Church of Rome, and at the same date a letter was addressed to Innocent IV. in the following unmistakable terms : "To the Reverend Father in Christ, Pope Innocent, chief Bishop, the nobles, with the whole community of

the realm, send commendation, with kissing of the feet. Our Mother, the Church of Rome, we love with all our hearts, as our duty is, and covet the increase of her honour with such affection as we may, as one to whom we ought always to fly for refuge."

In the following year Boniface, who had succeeded St Edmund Rich as archbishop of Canterbury, thus addressed the Pope, together with all the bishops of England: "We prostrate ourselves at the feet of your holiness, and with tears and prayers we beseech you that you will call to mind the fervour of English faith, and that the said kingdom has been specially devoted to the most holy Roman Church."

And all this at a time when papal exactions, and the intrusion of foreigners into English benefices, were crying evils, and causing so much irritation that Grosseteste agreed to the reading of a letter of expostulation at the Council of Lyons, written by representatives of the English clergy, against the enormous numbers of Italian ecclesiastics occupying English benefices. Later, he protested indignantly against the negligence of the Roman court that gave to the Church in England "pastors who devoured instead of feeding their flocks." Nevertheless, he was too well informed of the difficulties surrounding the Pope as a temporal sovereign at war with an emperor, and exiled from the patrimony of St Peter, to attribute papal demands to greed and avarice. The colossal scale on which the Pope's resources were drawn upon from every corner of the earth gave him the right, Grosseteste well knew, to subsidise the clergy, and when Henry blamed the bishop of Lincoln for undertaking to raise a further tax on ecclesiastics, he replied that they were bound to come to the aid of their spiritual Father in exile.

A notable paper, which appeared in the *Church Quarterly Review*¹ for April 1903, contained the

¹ Entitled *England and Rome in the Middle Ages*.

following statement, which is interesting as being the testimony of one outside the Church to the force and significance of papal authority in England at the time of which we write:—

“When once the Pope had been recognised as the repository of the orthodox tradition, it was hard to avoid the conclusion that he had the right to exercise great influence on the national Churches. This was in fact allowed by the most outspoken critics of the Curia and of individual Popes. England produced a fair number of such critics, and some of these were very bold. But there is not one who ventured to deny that the Pope had claims upon the obedience of the English Church. They might allege that he had overstepped the limits of his just prerogative; they never questioned that the prerogative itself was just and of considerable extent. . . . The breach with Rome (in the reign of Henry VIII.) entailed, therefore, a violent breach with old habits and old rules of conduct. . . . It was necessary in consequence to remodel our ecclesiastical institutions. But this revolution was trifling compared with the revolution in religious ideas and modes of thought. The elimination of the Papacy meant the introduction of a theory of the Catholic Church which might be patriotic, but had never been Anglican. . . . These facts being considered, it is evidently a mistake to speak of the Reformation as a mere episode in the history of the English Church. . . . The ground which the Papacy had won before the time of Gregory the Great was never called in question by any national Church before the Reformation. This, we venture to think, is the view taken by all the great historical apologists for the Anglican position. They have recognised the futility of appealing to the opinion of the mediæval Church, and we shall be well advised to follow their example.”

CHAPTER XXII

ST RICHARD OF CHICHESTER—PROVINCIAL COUNCIL
OF LAMBETH—JOHN OF PECKHAM, ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY — ROBERT OF WINCHELSEY,
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

GROSSETESTE died in 1253, and in the same year another great bishop of the English Church passed also to his well-earned reward. This was St Richard, bishop of Chichester. St Richard's history in its earlier stages is a curious piece of hagiography, but later the saint followed the usual course of those English bishops, his predecessors and contemporaries, who, refusing to be time-servers, resisted the higher powers in their oppression of the Church, and suffered for their fidelity. Born near Droitwich, the younger son of poor but respectable country people, Richard was at an early age inured to labour and hardship. When his elder brother succeeded to his modest patrimony, the young man's means proved insufficient to permit of his employing labourers on his farm. Richard therefore constituted himself his brother's waggoner and ploughman, and, in fact, was for a considerable time his only servant. The brother, not to be outdone in generosity, soon afterwards gave Richard the whole of his little property, a marriage with a rich heiress being in prospect for the younger of the two. But Richard had other views, and leaving to his brother both farm and marriage prospects, he betook himself to the University of Oxford. From thence he went to Paris, where he obtained a professor's chair. He then studied canon law at Bologna for seven years, at the end of which

time his master, who held him in great affection, offered him the hand of his daughter and the reversion of his fortune. But Richard aimed higher; he returned to Oxford, and lived a poor and mortified life, studying, lecturing and suffering, in poverty and comparative obscurity. Nevertheless, his merits did not long remain hidden, and he was ultimately elected chancellor of the University, mainly through the instrumentality of St Edmund of Canterbury and Bishop Grosseteste. Later, he became chancellor to St Edmund, and had almost the entire care of the archdiocese. He followed his holy patron into exile, but Boniface, St Edmund's successor, recalled him to the chancellorship of Canterbury, and during this period the bishopric of Chichester became vacant. A king's man was first elected, but when presented to Boniface for canonical examinations, his qualifications were found to be defective, and the election was annulled. St Richard was then unanimously chosen by the bishops, but the king, furious at the rejection of his favourite, declared Richard to be his enemy, and confiscated all the property of his see. The bishop-elect appealed to the Pope, who confirmed his election, and consecrated him with his own hands. For two years Richard administered his diocese in the utmost poverty, mainly subsisting on alms. At the end of that time, Innocent IV. commanded the king to restore the temporalities of the see of Chichester under pain of excommunication. Henry at last yielded, but the property had suffered to so great an extent in passing through his hands, that it is described as now "wretched and bare," a condition to which most of the "provisions" were reduced when confiscated by the Angevin kings for any length of time.

In 1261 Archbishop Boniface held a provincial council at Lambeth for the purpose of redressing some of the grievances under which the Church was groaning. It was decreed at this council that if in

future the king interfered with the course of matters purely spiritual—if, for instance, a prelate were summoned by the king's letter to answer in a secular court for having presented to or refused presentation to churches, or for having excommunicated, suspended or interdicted those under his jurisdiction, and other such charges, the prelate thus summoned was commanded not to attend. Other regulations dealing with the rights of the clergy were also made, and the royal encroachments in the matter of patronage were unanimously denounced. Above all, the secular law which forbade the sacrament of penance to be administered to criminals was severely censured.

The fight for these immunities from State interference, strenuously maintained by the representatives of the clergy under Henry III., was the same fight in which St Thomas died so valiantly under Henry II., and which was destined to be renewed again and again, until it burst out into open warfare in the reign of Henry VIII.

A pleasanter aspect of the character of Henry III. is shown in his rebuilding of Westminster Abbey on its present magnificent scale. To him England and the Church were indebted for the splendid shrine, sparkling with the finest gold and precious stones, in which the relics of St Edward the Confessor were laid in 1269, when the abbey church stood complete in all the glory of the best period of Gothic architecture.

In the following year died Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his successor, Robert of Kilwardby, being made cardinal and Bishop of Ostia in 1279, the Pope consecrated to the see of Canterbury the Franciscan John of Peckham, who ruled the Church in England till his death in 1292, the whole interval being occupied in guarding the interests of religion against the flagrant acts of aggression of Edward I. In the midst of his ecclesiastical dignity Archbishop Peckham retained all the simplicity and fervour of

his former religious life. His zeal in uprooting abuses was unbounded, and his humility such that when saying Mass in his own cathedral he would dispense with a sacristan, and himself light the candles on the altar. His *Constitutions of the Synod of Oxford*, drawn up in 1281, were constantly referred to in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the foundation of the existing practices in the English Church. These constitutions provided minutely for the due instruction of the people in all that appertained to religion. Robert of Winchelsey, his successor, added to John's zeal profound learning and a captivating personality.

Edward, the subjugator of Wales and Scotland, was insatiable in his demands on the already greatly narrowed pecuniary resources of the Church for supplies to satisfy his thirst for conquest. Summoning Convocation, he required of the clergy a subsidy amounting to one-half of their goods. He also demanded that an inventory should be made of the treasures contained in the churches and monasteries, and being met with a refusal, he seized in revenge the whole of the temporalities of the clergy, secular and regular, and declared the entire body to be outlaws. The monks of Canterbury were reduced to complete beggary for a whole month. At the end of this time the archbishop obtained for them some mitigation. When at last their property was restored to them, Edward told the archbishop to return thanks to him on his knees. But entering the king's presence with great dignity; Robert said, standing: "Blessed be the Most High, O lord, my king, who by His grace has purified the light of your mental eyes, so that you are able to know your condition, and to choose what is profitable for your salvation."

But the royal extortions were by no means at an end, and the reigns of both Edward I. and Edward II. multiplied ecclesiastical grievances against the crown. Robert of Winchelsey continued to fight the

good fight until the year 1313, when his great and devout life came to an end. Miracles were wrought at his tomb, and seven years after his death the prior and chapter of Canterbury petitioned the Pope for his canonisation.

CHAPTER XXIII

WYCLIF AND THE LOLLARDS

ADDED to the distress and misery caused by the royal exactions were other disorders in Church and State in England, which in the fourteenth century proceeded from two main causes, the exile of the Popes at Avignon and the condition of warfare between England and France. The papal exile lasted for seventy-five years, and the wars with France covered nearly the whole of that period. The head of the Church was practically a vassal of the French king, and the Papacy was at a marked disadvantage with regard to England, which was then suffering from the humiliation of defeat at the hands of the French, from the burden of a double taxation, and from the suspicion that the endowments of the rich benefices bestowed by the Pope on foreign prelates went to help the national enemy to make war on Englishmen. The fact that nearly all the members of the Sacred College were Frenchmen naturally increased the national irritation. It was an object lesson on the absolute necessity for the Papacy to be free from the control and domination of any temporal government whatever.

In 1324 the French invaded Aquitaine, and in spite of the success of our arms at Crécy and Poitiers, after fifty years nothing remained to the English Crown in France but the towns of Bordeaux and Bayonne. Then followed a period not only of misery and national bankruptcy, but one of deep disgrace, for in 1376 the French landed on our shores, and for some months occupied a part of Sussex.

It would have been impossible that all these things

should not have affected the temporal relations between England and the Holy See, although no amount of discontent argued opposition to any doctrine of the Church or revolt from the *spiritual* authority of the Pope. Heresy, it is clear, was practically unknown in England till the middle of the fourteenth century, and up to this time there never had been any confusion of ideas between the *spiritual* and the *temporal* jurisdiction. But then there arose a very complicated system of resistance to all forms of authority, as well as to the principle of taxation, whether ecclesiastical or secular. All men, it was declared, were made equal by God, who if He had pleased could have created servants from the beginning. Servitude was brought in by wicked men against the will of God, and when all the existing nobles and men of property should be dead, there would be liberty for all. Every peasant should be noble, none should be greater than another, power should be equal, and property held in common. It will be readily seen that these ideas, which ran like wildfire throughout the south of England, are almost identical with those of modern socialism and even nihilism. They were the very beginnings of Protestantism, and the man who was mainly responsible for introducing them into England was John Wyclif.

Wyclif's early history is obscure, and we know nothing certain of his career before the year 1361, when he was undoubtedly warden of Balliol College, Oxford, and in the following year rector of Fillingham in Lincolnshire. But it is as an ecclesiastical politician, entirely occupied with the reform of political abuses in the Church, that he first claims our notice, and it may be useful to remember here that all great heresiarchs have first brought themselves into repute by attacking evils which every right-minded man has deplored and condemned.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was virtually the ruler of England, his brother, Edward III., being

prematurely aged and almost imbecile, was Wyclif's friend and patron, until it became plain that Wyclif had shifted his ground, and that his doctrines savoured of heresy. The Pope was slow to condemn their author utterly, and it was not until he attacked the very central doctrine of the Church, transubstantiation, that he stood as a declared heresiarch before the world.

Wyclif never appealed personally to the masses, either in his political or doctrinal onslaughts. He spoke and wrote the language of the schools always. He was himself no demagogue, but he gathered round him a number of disciples, who translated his views into the vulgar tongue, and promulgated them among the people. After some form of rapid training he sent these men forth, dressed in a habit of one colour and pattern, in imitation of the friars, as itinerant preachers, to frequent fairs, churchyards, markets and all places where the people assembled in crowds. They were to loiter (loll) about, until they found an opportunity of addressing a considerable number, from which custom they gained their name of Lollards, their doctrine being termed Lollardy.¹ They talked eloquently of the shortcomings of the Church, of her incapacity to reform herself, of the failings of monks and friars, and of the higher ranks of the secular clergy. By degrees they proceeded to hint that there was no need for any Church at all; the sacraments disappeared; the one duty of the Christian minister was to preach; each one was qualified to interpret the Bible for himself. Lollardy became a recognised means of spreading Wyclifism. The warlike attitude it had from the first assumed towards the Papacy was in time taken up with regard to the entire Church as an institution, and gradually not only popular devotions, but the whole settled order of things in the State came under the ban of the Lollards. The immediate result was a great rising of the peasants in 1381, John Ball, a

¹ *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, Introduction

renegade priest, who had for many years promulgated Wyclif's doctrines, directly instigating the rebellion. In his attacks on the State he laid great stress on the iniquity of servage, which existed then only in name. He had long since fallen under ecclesiastical censure, was excommunicated, and shortly before the rising was imprisoned in Maidstone jail. But as he was being taken there, followed by a great concourse of people, he told them that he would soon be set free by an army of 20,000 men. His prediction was verified; a ragged regiment, led by Wat the Tyler, composed partly of real peasantry, partly of runaway apprentices, fraudulent debtors, thieves, highwaymen, and all haters of law, taxes and payment of any kind, whose numbers swelled to 100,000 men, camped out upon Blackheath. To them was brought their leader and idol, John Ball, whom a detachment of them had released, and who in an inflammatory speech egged them on to plunder and murder. They marched to London, which was soon delivered over to the rabble. Lambeth Palace was completely destroyed, and the costly treasures of John of Gaunt's house were hurled out of the windows, and hacked to pieces in the streets.

The young king, Richard II., who had succeeded his grandfather, Edward III., went out to parley with the mob. Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, was brutally murdered as he stood at the altar at St. John's Chapel in the Tower, his only offence being that as chancellor he had advocated the levy of the poll tax, and had caused John Ball to be imprisoned for sedition.

"At St Albans," says Capgrave, "they made a great destruction of houses, burning deeds and charters, books and rolls. . . . But soon after, this seditious man, Wat Tyler, was killed at London by the hands of William Walworth, mayor of London. Then was John Straw taken, and before his death he made this confession openly: 'When we were on the Black Heath, and sent after the king, if he had come unto us we should have killed all the lords and gentlemen

that came with him, and led him with us, to make the people suppose that he was the author of our rising. After that to slay the king, and then each of us should have the rule in divers places in England, and make laws after our own fantasies.'"¹

John Ball, while lying under sentence of death, confessed that he had learned his revolutionary doctrines from Wyclif, who had meanwhile become rector of Lutterworth. Hereupon Courtenay, bishop of London, who had succeeded the murdered Sudbury as archbishop and chancellor, was directed by Parliament to inquire into Wyclif's doctrines, on the express ground that the rector of Lutterworth and his preachers had disturbed the peace of the realm. But by this time Wyclif's influence was too far-reaching to be controlled by a synod, and although his doctrines were found to be heretical and were condemned, the Lollards were strong enough at Oxford to defy the archbishop. Even the chancellor of the University was contaminated, and flatly refused to silence a Lollard professor who preached heresy against the Blessed Sacrament on the feast of Corpus Christi.

Nevertheless Wyclif thought it prudent to retire permanently from the scene of conflict to Lutterworth, where he was supposed to be making a complete and new translation of the Bible. But there has been a great deal of misapprehension on the subject of Wyclif's labours in this field. The very manuscript displayed in the British Museum at the time of the Wyclif Exhibition, and labelled "The English Bible—Wickliffe's translation," bears internal evidence of its having belonged to Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, the friend of Archbishop Arundel, who once for all broke the strength of Lollardy in England, and was the uncompromising foe of Wyclifism. Dr Adam Clark, the Biblical scholar who was formerly in possession of this manuscript, proved that it was illuminated

¹ *The Chronicle of England.*

for the Duke of Gloucester, who was murdered in 1397. "How long before 1397 this work was written is uncertain," wrote Dr Clarke, "but it must have been, in the very nature of things, several years before this time." That Wyclif at some period of his career made a translation of some parts of the Bible appears to be incontestable, but there is no evidence to show that he ever translated the whole, and modern research and criticism prove beyond the possibility of doubt that none of the manuscripts now extant are his work.¹ Abbot Gasquet considers² that the English versions now known as the Wyclifite Scriptures are in reality only the authorised translations circulated in Wyclif's time. The reason given for this theory is the fact that so many of these versions are written with great elaboration, that they are rich in illuminated borders, executed by skilful artists, and were very costly productions, not such as Wyclif's "poor priests," hunted and persecuted, would be likely to possess. Like the copy we have mentioned as belonging to the Duke of Gloucester, a number of them can be traced to kings and princes of the blood royal. Such Bibles must necessarily have been authorised, and could not have emanated from the tainted and prohibited source to which they have been ignorantly attributed. At the utmost, some long-lost translation of the New Testament may have been the work of Wyclif's hand. The translation of the Old Testament ascribed to Wyclif was probably due to Dr Hereford, who from being an ardent Wyclifite recanted his errors, and died a Carthusian monk at Coventry.

Wyclif's position at Lutterworth was an ambiguous one. He had discarded doctrines that were part and parcel of the belief of all Christians who were not of his sect, and he sent his "poor priests" out to teach the world that they were indeed false doctrines, while

¹ *Fasc. Zig.*, Introduction.

² *The Old English Bible*, pp. 137-155.

he himself, having protested against "the idolatry of the Mass," lived at Lutterworth the life of any ordinary parish priest of those times. This entailed his saying Mass at least once a week, and on holidays; and as if to accentuate his false position, he was hearing his curate's Mass, which had proceeded as far as the Elevation, when he received his death-stroke. He died on the 31st December 1384.¹

During the reign of Richard II. the Lollards were allowed to sow their false doctrine and sedition practically unmolested. But in 1401, under Henry IV., was passed the famous Act of Parliament *De hæretico comburendo*, which made Lollardy a capital offence. In spite, however, of this Act, only two Lollards suffered at that time for their opinions. Archbishop Arundel caused a list of two hundred and sixty-seven propositions out of Wyclif's writings to be drawn up and condemned, and the books containing them were publicly burned at Oxford. A copy of the erroneous articles was kept in the public library of the University, and every graduate was obliged to take an oath against their maintenance.

In 1427 Wyclifism had not quite died out among the schoolmen, and as a popular movement it was still active in 1414, when Sir John Oldcastle identified himself with the Lollards and fortified his house against the king's men. He was taken prisoner and sent to the Tower, thirty-nine of the leaders of the revolt being executed under the above-mentioned Act of 1401. Oldcastle himself was hanged as a traitor, and a slow fire was kindled under his feet to denote the heretical notions that had led him astray.

Wyclifism was all but extinct in England when in the middle of the sixteenth century the Protestantism that was made in Germany and at Geneva was grafted upon the remains of Lollardy.

¹ Lewis Segeant, *John Wyclif, Last of the Schoolmen and First of the English Reformers*, p. 4.

CHAPTER XXIV

ENGLAND'S DEVOTION TO OUR LADY AND ST PETER

IT must not be supposed that the agitators, heresiarchs and itinerant demagogues, who were loud in denouncing all that was displeasing to them in Church and State, confusing just laws with their abuse, represented in any marked degree the opinion and feeling of the nation. Neither did these disturbing elements interfere with the great majority of men of good will, who were bent on leading devout Catholic lives, and on remaining peaceable and loyal subjects of the king. Up to the very eve of the Reformation two great features especially characterised the Church in England. These were: loyalty to the Apostolic See and devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Repeated proof has already been given us of the strength of the bond which had always united this country to the See of Peter. That it was not less strong in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the following instances will show. Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote in 1349: "Christ sat in the Chair of St Peter to teach us mystically that in the boat of Peter, the Church of Rome, the authority and teaching of all Christian doctrine should reside. To the judgment, therefore, of so authentic and great a teacher, I submit and subject fully and altogether myself and my writings, now and hereafter." Archbishop Arundel, whose special glory it was to have almost entirely uprooted the poisonous weeds of Lollardy, and to have cast them out of the land, sought approval of the Sovereign Pontiff in a letter

which ended thus: "For this (the See of Peter) is that most blessed see which by God's almighty grace is known never to have erred from the path of apostolic tradition; which has never been stained or overcome by heretical novelty, but to which, as the mother and mistress of all other churches, the holy Fathers ordained that all matters, and chiefly those relating to faith, should be referred for decision and sentence."¹

Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote in 1428 in similar strains, and the Popes themselves, in acknowledgment of the known loyalty of Englishmen to the centre of all truth and unity, conferred upon them the title of "singular and special sons of blessed Peter." Their patrons were our Lady and St Peter, to whom was added the knightly hero St George at the time of the Crusades.

On the accession of Pope Martin V. the University of Oxford assured him that they rejoiced to behold his gracious person preside "as true head in the body of the Church militant." They styled him "the one Supreme Pontiff and Vicar of Christ, and most true successor of St Peter," saluting him as having been raised "to the summit of Apostolic dignity," and they go on to describe themselves as "with bended knees prostrate in all obedience at the feet of your Holiness."

Thus England was and always had been thoroughly papal. The Church and the University testify to the fact, and even the fierce quarrels that surged round the calamitous schism of the Papacy are a proof, were additional proof needed, that the Papacy was held by all but Lollards to be an indispensable institution. In the furiously debated question as to which was the true Pope and which the antipope, Englishmen testified to the absolute need of a Supreme Pontiff. No one dreamed of getting on without a Pope at all. The question was not one of principle, but as to which was the right person. Given that he was the lawfully and

¹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. III., p. 350.

regularly elected successor of St Peter, the Pope was unanimously admitted to be the source on earth of all true doctrine, and to claim rightfully the obedience of all the faithful. To the eternal honour of England, when once the truth was known, she never swerved from her allegiance to the canonically-elected successor of St Peter. This was in a great measure due to the care taken by Richard II. to ascertain the real facts concerning the conclave which elected Urban VI. Having arrived at the inevitable conclusion, he wrote to announce the result of his investigation to Peter, King of Arragon, who with the Emperor Wenceslaus also decided in favour of Urban.

When Sir John Oldcastle was arraigned for heresy, Convocation thus formulated his offence—"He has thought, and thinks, and dogmatises, and teaches concerning the sacrament of the altar and penance, &c., *otherwise than the Roman and Universal Church teaches and affirms,*" and in these words which we have italicised lies the whole matter of continuity in a nutshell. The Church of England before the Reformation laid the utmost stress on union of faith with Rome. Those only who at the present day do likewise can be said to have any right to represent that Church.

It was fitting that so great a loyalty to the Vicar of Christ should be accompanied by devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and we should expect to find traces of the love and veneration of her clients in shrine and monument distributed broadcast throughout the land. Nor in spite of the havoc wrought on these shrines at the Reformation are we disappointed. "The contemplation of the great mystery of the Incarnation," wrote Archbishop Arundel in 1399, "has drawn all Christian nations to venerate her from whom came the first beginnings of our redemption. But we English, being the servants of her special inheritance and her own dowry, as we are commonly called, ought to surpass others in the fervour of our

praises and devotions,"¹ and in effect, from early Saxon, through Norman times and on to the sixteenth century, churches were dedicated to God in honour of His blessed Mother all over England. The church now known as St Saviour's, Southwark, was called St Mary Overies up to the time of the Reformation, and the Rev. T. Bridgett observes² that there is scarcely a town in England which does not possess a St Mary's church, the dedication, if not the actual fabric, dating from Catholic times.

Our Lady's Abbey of Glastonbury took precedence of all other abbeys until the twelfth century, when St Alban's occupied the foremost rank. In 607 St Augustine built a church under her invocation at Ely, and St Lawrence another at Canterbury. St Cedd, Bishop of London, was buried in the church of the monastery at Lestringham, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and we might fill pages with similar instances. It was the rule of the Orders of Citeaux and of Sempringham that all their churches should be dedicated to the Mother of God, and besides these, almost every large church throughout the kingdom possessed a Lady chapel, the east end of the church being reserved for this chapel. In small churches, where there was no Lady chapel, there was always an altar in her honour, and sometimes more than one.

It was a frequent custom to build chapels on bridges, and to place them under the invocation of St Mary, and in a council held at Exeter in 1287, it was decreed that in every parish church her statue should stand beside that of the patron saint of the church. These statues were often made of pure gold, silver, or of silver gilt, or of ivory. Nothing was too costly to express the love and veneration in which she was held, and vast sums were lavished on her images. Her crown would often contain precious

¹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. III., p. 246.

² *Our Lady's Dowry*, p. 247.

stones and pearls; her mantle was of cloth-of-gold, damask or velvet. Magnificent canopies were erected over these images, and the faithful were to be seen in groups and singly, kneeling before them in pious supplication of the Queen of Heaven.

The most famous English sanctuary of our Lady was that of Walsingham, in Norfolk, and as late as the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was renowned far and wide as a place of pilgrimage, where innumerable miracles took place, and where abundant graces were bestowed. Henry III., the four Edwards, David Bruce, Henry VI. and Henry VII. went there on pilgrimage. In 1510 Henry VIII. also took the pilgrim's staff, and is said to have walked barefoot the last stage of the journey to Walsingham. He presented a costly necklace to our Lady's statue on this occasion, and three years later he returned to the shrine, accompanied by Queen Katharine of Arragon, to return thanks for the victory of Flodden Field.

After Walsingham, the shrines of our Lady at Ipswich, Coventry and Worcester were the most celebrated, being the object of numberless pilgrimages.

But London was by no means backward in devotion to the Blessed Virgin. At St Paul's, besides the altar in the Lady chapel, where Mass was daily celebrated in her honour, there was an altar above the choir, and a statue of the divine Mother, while several other such statues were to be seen in the body of the church. All Hallows, Barking, on Tower Hill, had a Lady chapel containing an image that was placed there by Edward I., and which was so beautiful that the citizens' wives could fancy it smiled upon them as they prayed before it. Volumes might be filled with the records of England's love of and filial devotion to the august Queen, of whom Dante wrote that she was "Virgin, Mother, Daughter of her Son." In the ages of faith curative springs and holy wells were dedicated to her all over the country, and her praises

were sung in quaint hymns in the vernacular, while the mystery plays represented, in vivid and forcible language, her joys, her sorrows, and her glories. To those interested in the subject, we cannot do better than recommend Father Bridgett's incomparable little work, *Our Lady's Dowry*.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW ENGLAND WAS WRENCHED FROM ROME

IN order to gain a correct notion of what happened in England at the time of the Reformation, it is necessary to pass in review the events which succeeded the disastrous French wars. The glory of Agincourt cost the House of Lancaster dear, and the burning of the Maid of Orleans, a permanent blot on our escutcheon, was avenged by the loss of almost our last foothold in France. Nor did evil fortune end here. England rose in fury against the weakness of a government to which it attributed the national disgrace. Scarcely was Jack Cade's insurrection suppressed, and its leader slain, when the Duke of York laid claim to the throne as the descendant of the fifth son of Edward III., and marched with 3000 men against Henry VI., who was encamped at St Alban's. This was the beginning of the bloody Wars of the Roses, which ended in 1485 with the crowning of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, the Lancastrian claimant, on Bosworth field. Yorkist conspiracies troubled nearly the whole of the reign of Henry VII., but even without them the country would still have been in a deplorable condition. For in 1348 the terrible visitation of the plague known as the Black Death had made its appearance in England, and raging for many years, had swept away more than half the population, which even before the terrible pestilence had amounted to little more than three and a half millions. In Yorkshire alone one-half of the priesthood succumbed to its ravages, and in the diocese of Norwich two-thirds of the parish

priests had died, while in the city of Norwich itself nearly 60,000 persons perished. Other parts of the country were decimated in the same proportion. In the civil wars the flower of English chivalry fell, and the ancient baronage of the realm became almost as extinct as the Middle Ages themselves. When Henry VII. summoned his first parliament there were but thirty temporal peers left to obey the summons.

The new men who succeeded to the old acres were of a different fibre from the former incumbents, and even the remnant who survived the storm and stress of the civil wars became more or less animated with the modern spirit. Their ranks were recruited from the middle classes, now growing in wealth and importance, but naturally devoid of the traditions that had animated the old feudal nobility. Men who were the outcome of the new political conditions, and who were the creatures of the Tudor kings, would, it might have been foreseen, fall an easy prey to Tudor tyranny. That this really was the case the sequel will show, for while the people remained faithful to the ancient religion, the nobility for the most part fell away under pressure, or for the sake of gain, and the higher ranks of the clergy, with few exceptions, allowed themselves to be deluded by the specious arguments prompted by the unbridled passions of Henry VIII. Those whom he failed to convince by his logic yielded to the potent and uncompromising argument of the scaffold, which overshadowed the whole domestic policy of this reign. The names of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Sir Thomas More, Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, and her son, Lord Montague, the London Carthusians, together with some others who laid down their lives rather than betray their consciences, are brilliant exceptions among a large majority, whose enfeebled wills and love of worldly gain made them so abjectly subservient to the caprice of the tyrant, that they obediently bowed their necks beneath the Tudor heel.

It must, however, in fairness be admitted that so utterly unheard-of were the king's pretensions, so entirely without precedent in history, that Englishmen might to some extent be excused if, ignorant as to whither their acquiescence would ultimately lead the country, they consented to measures which they regarded as merely temporary. Moreover, it is certain that while Henry VIII. and his secretary, Thomas Cromwell, claimed for the king *spiritual* jurisdiction over the Church of England, Archbishop Warham and his suffragan bishops merely understood that the king had taken into his own hands all jurisdiction over the *temporal* affairs of the Church, which the Pope had hitherto exercised. Warham, in protesting that there should be "no derogation of the Roman Pontiff or the Apostolic See," showed that Convocation meant one thing, while the king meant another. The archbishop's last official act before he died was to draft an important speech to be delivered in the House of Lords, showing the impossibility of a layman having spiritual jurisdiction. This argument was based on the very nature of the constitution of the Christian Church.¹

The oft-told story of England's wrench from Rome may be briefly related here. Henry VIII. had been married for nearly twenty years to Katharine, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. The marriage had been a happy one, although the queen was Henry's senior by several years, and her goodness and intelligence were such that her praises were on the lips of all. Several children had been born to the royal pair, but none had survived except the Princess Mary, who was looked upon by the English people as her father's successor, and was extremely beloved by them. Katharine had been previously contracted to Henry's elder brother Arthur, and the marriage ceremony had taken place. But in a few months Arthur, who had always been a sickly youth,

¹ Abbot Gasquet, *The Eve of the Reformation*, p. III.

died at the age of fifteen, whereupon the Pope was asked to grant a dispensation to enable Henry to marry her. While the negotiations for this second marriage were going on, Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII., died, and he then proposed that he should himself marry Katharine. Repulsive as this proposal was, and although Katharine's mother, Queen Isabella, refused to give it a moment's consideration, it furnishes a further proof, if that were necessary, that there existed no impediment of affinity.¹ In course of time, the bull of dispensation granted by Julius II. for her marriage with Prince Henry arrived, but although it was signed on December 26th, 1503, the marriage did not take place till more than five years later, a few weeks after the death of Henry VII., and the accession of the royal bridegroom.

The description of Henry VIII., given by the Venetian ambassadors at this period, is wonderful reading. They praise his piety, which was so great that he heard from three to five Masses daily; they comment on his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, on his horror of heresy, his loyalty to the Holy See, his love for the queen, his generosity, chivalry and clemency. Yet even amidst all the glamour of his accession glimpses of the cruelty that underlay his vanity were not wanting. A slight wound to his self-love, a passing fit of anger, and a pitilessness, a desire for revenge, all the more striking from the usual urbanity of his pleasure-seeking temperament, would stand revealed in savage disregard of any will but his own. But meanwhile, in the intervals of pleasure and of the business of State, Henry found time to devote himself to theological pursuits, and to write a treatise against Luther and in defence of the seven sacraments. Leo X. recognised the ability of this work by conferring on the king the title of *Defender of the Faith*, a legend which is borne to this day by the sovereign ruler of England.

¹ Bergenroth, Spanish Calendar. Preface.

The first cloud on the horizon was the appearance at court of Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn and sister of a former paramour of the king's, a woman of some beauty but little virtue, with whom Henry fell madly in love. Simultaneously with this appearance are chronicled the king's tardy "scruples of conscience" for having married his brother's widow, and his doubts as to whether the Pope had had power to dispense in the matter. He bade Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York, hold a legatine court, together with Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and cite him to appear and answer to the charge of having unlawfully lived with his brother's widow for eighteen years. In the meantime he sent a secret agent to Rome, to ask the Pope for a dispensation to marry Anne Boleyn, whether he was already legally married or not.¹ If this should be refused, the agent was to procure him a dispensation to marry Anne, with whom he had already contracted affinity in the first degree, the dispensation to be used only if the king's actual marriage should be declared null. The hypocrisy of this proceeding is clear, for while Henry's "scruples" were supposed to prevent his continuing to live with Katharine as his wife because she had been his brother's, they were powerless to prevent his union with one who already stood towards him in the same relationship.

Needless to say, the Pope declined to lend himself to these nefarious schemes, but he could not refuse to investigate the validity of the king's marriage, and he sent Cardinal Campeggio to England to try the case with Wolsey. Wolsey, however, had pledged himself to the king, and did all he could to induce Campeggio to view the matter in the light in which he himself had resolved to see it. But Campeggio was determined that justice should be done.

Katharine had appealed to the Pope, and as it

¹ Brewer Calendar, IV., p. 1552. Gairdner in the *English Historical Review*, vol. XI., "New Lights," &c.

became more and more clear that it would be impossible to obtain a fair trial in England, the case was removed to Rome. Wolsey was disgraced for his failure to wring a verdict from Campeggio according to Henry's desire. His fall was the prelude to a great conversion of heart; his eyes were opened to the worldliness of his former life, and he died a sincere penitent a little more than a year later.¹

Meanwhile Henry had discovered a willing tool in the person of Thomas Cranmer, a young cleric, who gained the king's favour by the astounding assertion that it was for the Archbishop of Canterbury rather than for the Pope to pronounce sentence on his marriage. Henceforth Cranmer's fortune was made. The young man, who had not distinguished himself for learning or parts at the university, was told to write a book in favour of the divorce; but, as yet, Henry's intention was to intimidate, not to break entirely with, the Pope, and on the death of Warham in August 1532, Cranmer was at once put forward as a candidate for the vacant see of Canterbury. His election was hurried on, in the hope that if the Pope gave an adverse sentence the new archbishop might dissolve the king's marriage by his own authority. The papal bulls were therefore to be obtained at the cost of any duplicity. They were in Henry's hands before Clement VII. had an inkling of what was intended.

In January 1533 Anne Boleyn announced that Henry might expect an heir to the throne; and in order that this heir might be considered legitimate, their marriage was celebrated in haste and secrecy on the 25th of that month. Cranmer arrived in England in March, and at once brought the subject of the divorce before Convocation. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, was the only member who ventured to raise any opposition to it. The House of Commons

¹ *Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey*, by George Cavendish, gentleman-usher to Cardinal Wolsey.

was as pliable as Convocation, and Cranmer received a commission to hold an ecclesiastical court at Dunstable. In this court he pronounced the marriage between Henry and Katharine null. In July the Pope excommunicated Henry, and declared his remarriage to be void and of no effect. Henry retorted that the Pope's authority in England was no greater than that of any other foreign bishop, and Acts of Parliament were then passed abolishing annates, Peter Pence, appeals to Rome, and the promulgation of papal bulls. Another Act dealing with the royal succession, and entailing it on the children of Henry and Anne Boleyn, was accompanied by an oath to be taken by every adult person in the kingdom. In this eminently respectable fashion was the rupture with Rome effected.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SEQUEL TO THE KING'S DIVORCE

AMONG those bidden to the ceremony of Anne Boleyn's coronation was Henry's former chancellor, Sir Thomas More. So long as the question of the royal marriage had been in debate he had done his best to obtain a decision favourable to the king's desire. But when once Clement VII. had shown indications of an adverse decision, even before judgment was pronounced, bowing before the impending storm, More resigned the chancellorship, and retired into private life. He was fully alive to the effect which his refusal to attend Anne's coronation would produce, and when the ceremony had taken place, he watched with keen personal interest the progress of events. Henry's next step was to carry a bill through Parliament, transferring the supreme headship of the Church in England to the sovereign.

All subterfuge was now at an end, and clergy and laity knew that the king had usurped the spiritual no less than the temporal jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs, a measure to which all had been blind in Warham's day, though it is clear by the light of subsequent events that even then Henry and Cromwell had intended to carry it. Convocation was brow-beaten into submission, and all the bishops, except blessed John Fisher, weakly and miserably yielded to the king's tyranny. It has been said in their excuse that they did not understand the true nature of the new Act of Parliament, nor realise that the royal supremacy included the power to define doctrines. And it cannot be denied that, owing to the false

principles that had crept in since the disputed succession of the Papacy, and to the want of deep theological study, the vital importance of the supremacy of the Holy See was less thoroughly realised in England than in former times. Even those who afterwards suffered valiantly for the truth needed time before the full significance of the Act dawned upon them. Only a few, such as More, Fisher and the Franciscan Observants, realised from the first all that it meant. Henry next proceeded to prohibit bishops-elect from procuring bulls of confirmation from Rome, and those who had already received them were required to surrender them into the king's hands, Henry pretending to succeed to the authority of which the Vicar of Christ had been deprived. Those who denied the royal supremacy were to be declared guilty of high treason.

The servility of the bishops lent an appearance of general acquiescence in the schism, but some of the more thoughtful among the religious protested in a manner to make others hesitate and draw back. Friars Rich and Risbey, Franciscan observants, together with two Benedictine monks and two secular priests, were the first-fruits of the conflict, and were executed at Tyburn on April 20th, 1534. Two of their brethren had preached boldly before the king against the iniquity of his second marriage that was no marriage, and not unnaturally had incurred his anger by their plain speaking.

"You deserve," said Cromwell to them afterwards, "to be put into a sack and thrown into the Thames."

"My lord," replied Friar Elstow, "be pleased to frighten your court epicures with such sentences as these . . . and as for your Thames, the road to Heaven lies as near by water as by land, and therefore it is indifferent to us which way we go there."

Father John Forest, provincial of the Franciscans, was hanged in chains, and roasted over a slow fire in Smithfield, on May 28th, for refusing to take the oath

of supremacy.¹ On the other hand, the Carthusians, who were distinguished for their regularity, austerity, and sanctity, had taken it, after holding out stoutly for a long time. However, before many months had passed they saw the matter more clearly, recognised their error, and retracted their oath. The king's vengeance descended at once on their devoted heads. John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, was accordingly brought to trial at Westminster, with two other Carthusian priors, two monks of different orders and a secular priest. They were found guilty of high treason for refusing the oath of supremacy, and were executed with the greatest brutality.

In May 1536 the new prior of the Charterhouse and twenty monks, worn out with the persecution that followed on resistance, took the oath. Ten others persevered steadfastly, and were committed to Newgate, where they were chained to iron posts by their necks, arms and thighs, so that they could not move for any purpose whatever, but were obliged to remain standing in one position till they died of starvation and misery. Only one of the ten survived, lingered in prison for four years, and was then hanged at Tyburn.

Henry made some vain attempts to win over Sir Thomas More. He sent the Duke of Norfolk, Anne's uncle, to him. "By the Mass, Mr More," said the Duke, "it is perilous striving with princes; therefore I would wish you somewhat to incline to the king's pleasure; for by God's Body, Mr More, *indignatio principis mors est.*"² "Is that all, my lord?" answered Sir Thomas, "then in good faith, between your grace and me is but this, that I shall die to-day and you to-morrow." He was formally called upon to take the oath on Low Sunday 1534. He refused it, and was sent to the Tower. Standing by the window of his

¹ Chronicle of Henry VIII. "*How a Doctor was burnt.*" For an account of the sufferings of the Franciscan Observants, see *Faithful unto Death*, by J. M. Stone.

² The wrath of the prince is death.

cell with his beloved daughter, Margaret Roper, who had been admitted to visit him that day, he pointed out to her the Carthusian priors being led to execution. "Lo, dost thou not see, Meg," said he, "that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to their marriage."¹

When his own time came his attitude was no less cheerful. On May 7th he was again examined, together with John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and a little later three interrogatories were drawn up and presented to them. More declined to answer any of the questions; Fisher agreed to swear to the Act of Succession (by which Anne's children would be recognised), but he refused the oath of supremacy. For this he was brought to trial with three Carthusians, who suffered death for the same cause at Tyburn on July 19th, 1535, Fisher being executed on the 22nd. Sir Thomas More was also found guilty under the new Acts, and when sentence of death had been passed upon him he made a speech, in which he declared that he had studied the subject of the statute for seven years, and could never find any good authority for maintaining that a temporal lord could or ought to be head of the spirituality.² He was beheaded on July 6th, 1535.

Cromwell's plan for nationalising the Church of England was succeeding marvellously. England had been wrenched from Rome with a facility that would have seemed impossible to the preceding generation, and all those who had opposed the wrench had been brought to the scaffold, or had been made to perish in some other way. His next step was to bring about the dissolution of the monasteries, and to pour their revenues into the royal coffers—and his own. Henry had already dissipated the wealth accumulated by his father, and welcomed any plan by which his exchequer

¹ Rev. T. Bridgett, *Life and Writings of Sir Thomas More*, Lord Chancellor of England, p. 404.

² *Ibid*, p. 422.

might be replenished. When commissioners were appointed to inquire into and report on the condition of the religious houses, spoliation, not reform, was the end in view, coupled with the enforcing of the Royal Supremacy Act. Complaints were not altogether wanting as to the decay of the monastic spirit, and there was a great falling off of vocations to the religious life. Some of the monasteries and convents were distinctly relaxed in discipline, but these cases were largely multiplied and grossly exaggerated to serve the purpose of Henry and Cromwell. Trumped up charges were brought against a large number of religious houses that had a wide reputation for regularity and sanctity. Twelve abbots were executed without the least pretence of a fair trial, and whole communities were turned out of their homes to exist as they might, while these ancient sanctuaries of piety and learning, that had for long centuries only echoed the sounds of prayer and praise, were now bestowed on royal favourites, sometimes as payment of gambling debts.

It must not, however, be supposed that the bill for the dissolution of the monasteries and the transfer of the plunder to the Crown passed through the House of Commons without great opposition. But for the threats and objurgations of the king and his chief secretary, the measure would never have been carried, and even so it caused a rebellion in the north, in which part of the country the monks were extremely popular. This rebellion, called the Pilgrimage of Grace, was headed by Lord Dacre and Robert Aske, who had 30,000 "tall men and well horsed" under them, demanding reunion with Rome, and redress of the wrongs done to the Church. Their badges and banners bore the effigy of Christ crucified, the chalice, the Host and the emblems of the Passion. Wherever they went they reinstated the religious in their monasteries. The king's forces under the Duke of Norfolk numbered but 6000 men, who were hampered in their march northwards by the disaffection of the midland

and eastern counties. Cromwell soon saw that his one chance lay in negotiation, a word synonymous to him with stratagem and fraud. He offered the insurgents a free pardon and a parliament at York if they would lay down their arms, the promise being so worded that it was understood by all to mean consent to their demands. Accordingly, they disbanded their troops, and by degrees order was restored. But the Duke of Norfolk had also been busy in throwing a garrison into every northern town, and when it became only too apparent that not one of the king's promises was to be kept, some of the northern nobles again took up arms. This was made the pretext for the withdrawal of every promised concession, and for the infliction of appalling reprisals. "It was," says one writer, "as if the earth had broken out in gibbets." The Duke of Norfolk declared that his only regret was that there were not iron chains enough in the country in which to hang the prisoners; ropes must serve for some.

The lords Dacre and Hussey were beheaded. The Earl of Northumberland and Sir Robert Constable, with three others, were hanged. Lady Bulmer, for encouraging the rebels, was burned at the stake. Lord Dacre, addressing Cromwell before his execution, said solemnly: "It is thou that art the very special and chief cause of all this rebellion and wickedness, and dost daily travail to bring us to our ends and strike off our heads. I trust that ere thou diest, though thou wouldst procure all the noblest heads within the realm to be stricken off, yet there shall one head remain that shall strike off thy head." Little did any there present suspect that Henry himself, less than four years later, should decree the fall of Cromwell's head.

The northern people, still uncrushed by the iron hand that was upon them, tried to pull the curate out of the pulpit in Kendal parish church, shouting, "He shall proclaim the Pope to be Supreme Head of the Church or be cast into the water!"¹

¹ Gairdner, *Calendar of State Papers*, XII., 384.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE PARTED WAYS

HENRY VIII., by means of the clever scheming of his chief secretary, Cromwell, and the complaisance of Cranmer, had usurped the title of Supreme Head of the Church of England, thereby leading it into schism. The question now arises: Where, then, was the Catholic Church in this country? The answer is to be found in the sufferings of all those who resisted the iniquitous proceedings of the king and his advisers. It is seen in the death of the Bishop of Rochester, in that of Sir Thomas More and the martyred Carthusians, in the death and persecution of the Franciscan Observants, and of the other religious orders, in the homeless and starving condition of those who had been ejected from the suppressed monasteries, in the lawful, if timid, attitude of those who, like Margaret Roper and her husband, took the new oaths only "as far as it would stand with the law of God," and, as it were, conditionally.

Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia—where Peter is, there is the Church, and although in other things Henry's new State Church went on much as before, nevertheless, because Peter was not in its midst, it was no longer any part of the Catholic Church. If, as Sir Thomas More testified, it was not possible for a *spiritual* body to have a *temporal* head, then that body represented by the titular Church of England after the schism was headless, and one has never heard of any living organism without a head. Therefore, only those who clung to the successors of St Peter, the Supreme Head of the Church on earth,

could rightly claim to represent the Catholic Church in England. The words of Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, as he mounted the scaffold, are a perfect illustration of this fact:—

“I call Almighty God to witness,” he said, “and all good people, and I beseech you all here present, to bear witness for me in the day of Judgment, that being here to die, I declare that it is from no obstinate, rebellious spirit that I do not obey the king, but because I fear to offend the majesty of God. Our Holy Mother the Church has decreed otherwise than the king and the Parliament have decreed, and therefore, rather than disobey the Church, I am ready to suffer. Pray for me, and have mercy on my brethren, of whom I have been the unworthy prior.”¹

Henry was determined to play at being Pope, lest people should pretend that he tolerated heresy; and as the foreign Protestant sects had introduced a good deal of false doctrine into the country by the connivance of their friend Cromwell, there was considerable wrangling about doctrinal matters. Accordingly, in his new capacity of Supreme Head, Henry conducted a trial for heresy against John Lambert for his denial of the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. Lambert refusing to recant, was burned at Smithfield. Henry never lost his faith in this great central doctrine, and to the day of his death manifested profound devotion to the sacrifice of the Mass. It is related of him that during his last illness, when surrounding courtiers remonstrated with him for kneeling during Mass in his weak and suffering condition, he replied: “If I could throw myself down, not only on the ground, but under the ground, I should not then think that I gave honour enough to the most holy Sacrament.”

Henry's Catholic traditions and affections, where

¹ *Spanish State Papers*, vol. V., p. 726.

his passions were not involved, were a distinct hindrance to Cromwell's scheme for protestantising England, and though the minister was a far more consistent politician than the king, Cromwell could only maintain his ground while they were both pursuing the same ends. Together with Cranmer he had conspired against the king's first marriage, had declared the Princess Mary illegitimate, had pronounced Henry's union with Anne Boleyn good and lawful, and had discovered that the same was "null, void and of no effect" when Henry was tired of her, and Queen Katharine being dead, he was really free to contract a new marriage. Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, had not survived the birth of a son, and Cromwell, wholly occupied with his plan of protestantising the Church and the nation, thought to cement the friendship of England with Lutheran Germany by bringing about a marriage between his master and a Lutheran princess, the sister of the Duke of Cleves. It was this dogged persistence in his scheme, regardless of the actual trend of Henry's opinions, that brought about his downfall. A Catholic reaction, always excepting papal supremacy, was going on in the mind of the king. The Lutherans were therefore at a discount, and the marriage with Anne of Cleves was scarcely accomplished, when the accommodating Cranmer was required to annul it. Cromwell was sent to the Tower and executed, in spite of his craven pleading for life, a victim to the bloody laws he had himself framed. His last acts before his arrest were worthy of "the meanest wretch ever born in England." Reginald Pole, Henry's nearest kinsman, had been driven into exile for his attitude with regard to the king's first marriage. He took refuge in Rome, and after Henry's assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy, wrote and published a book *On the Unity of the Church*. In revenge, the real culprit being out of reach, Cromwell struck at every member of Pole's family. His aged mother,

the Countess of Salisbury, his brother and nephew were thrown into prison. Lord Montague was reported by spies to have said to Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, "Knaves rule about the king," and that he trusted "to give them a buffet some day." It was enough to send them both to the block, together with Courtenay's wife and Montague's only son. Courtenay's son grew up in prison, and remained there till Mary released him and other prisoners on her accession. Cromwell had gone to his account two years before the sword fell which he had suspended over Lady Salisbury's grey head. Henry had her brought to the block for no other reason than because she corresponded with her exiled son, who had appealed to the emperor to execute the Pope's bull of deposition against him.

Since the year 1535 the Pope's name had been erased from the missal and breviary, but so long as Henry lived there was no further change in the liturgical books, except the omission of the office of St Thomas of Canterbury. His shrine in Canterbury Cathedral, once the resort of pilgrims from all parts of the world, had been pillaged by the royal commissioners, and his relics scattered to the winds.

With the wane of Cromwell's influence a marked return to Catholic ideas took place. The *Six Articles of Religion*, a kind of official declaration of the king's religious opinions, and consequently of those of the Church whose head he was, maintained :—1. The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and a doctrine that was virtually transubstantiation ; 2. The sufficiency of Communion under one kind ; 3. The unlawfulness of the marriage of priests ; 4. The binding nature of vows of chastity ; 5. That private Masses should be continued ; 6. That auricular confession to a priest was expedient and necessary. These articles were all distasteful to Cromwell, and were one of the causes of his downfall ; but Cranmer was content to sway backwards and forwards, at the

will and caprice of his master. He obediently made and unmade Henry's marriages, and endorsed his varying creeds, now dallying with the Lutherans (he had taken the opportunity when the tide was in that direction of marrying a Lutheran himself as his second wife), now adopting a more Catholic set of doctrines than theirs, apparently without a scruple. These were indeed the purposes for which Henry had set him up, and had he forced any views of his own, he would doubtless, during one or the other of Henry's religious phases, like Cromwell, have paid for his temerity with his life. It was far safer to be a man of straw than a man of iron, when every conviction that clashed with the king's led invariably to the scaffold.

Of one thing it seems probable that Henry repented sincerely in his later years. He had allowed Coverdale's translation of the Bible to be circulated in England, and subsequently other vernacular renderings of the Scriptures were at least tolerated by him, although he never heartily approved of the sacred volume being at the mercy of the ignorant. At length the evil consequences of the profane handling of the Bible became so evident that the Bishop of London was forced, owing to the disturbances caused by the noisy and irreverent discussions as to the meaning of certain passages, to remove the six chained Bibles from St Paul's Cathedral. A few years later an Act of Parliament was passed, ordering all Bibles bearing Tyndale's name and containing his notes to be destroyed. In 1546 even Coverdale's translation was prohibited, and the reading of the Bible was limited to the learned. "I am very sorry to know," said Henry VIII., in one of his last speeches in Parliament, "how that most precious jewel, the Word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every ale-house. I am equally sorry that the readers of the same follow it so faintly and coldly in living; for this I am sure, that charity was never

so faint among you, and virtuous and godly living was never less revered, honoured and served." A sorry admission to be made by the king, at the end of a life that had been mainly passed in bringing about the very condition of things which he now so bitterly deplored.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MAKING OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF ENGLAND

"THE Church of England," wrote Dr Short, Anglican Bishop of St Asaph, in 1847, "first ceased to be a member of the Church of Rome during the reign of Henry VIII., but it could hardly be called Protestant till that of Edward VI. . . . During the short reign of Edward VI. it became entirely Protestant, and in point of doctrine assumed its present form."

Henry VIII. breathed his last in January 1547, and with him died the last remnant of that conservative party in the new State Church which still clung to Catholic dogma. Cranmer had long been a Protestant at heart, and interest alone had induced him to disguise his leanings. But now he might be as frank as he chose, and it was observed in the spring of 1549 that "this year the archbishop of Canterbury did eat meat openly in Lent in the hall of Lambeth, the like of which was never seen since England was a Christian country."

An amusing incident connected with Cranmer's second marriage may also be quoted. On Henry's promulgation of the *Six Articles*, one of which forbade the marriage of priests, the archbishop had been obliged to dismiss his wife, a niece of the reformer Osiander. Ever since the veering of the wind to a more Catholic quarter, it had cost him no little trouble and inconvenience to conceal her presence in the episcopal palace. When he travelled he had her conveyed from place to place in a chest with holes pierced in it to allow of her breathing. On one occasion screams

were heard issuing from the chest, which had been placed the wrong side uppermost, and it was ascertained that the lady was suffocating. When Cranmer could conceal her no longer, he sent her back to Germany. She resumed her place openly at Lambeth when, in the year following Henry's death, Parliament passed a bill to take away all positive laws made against the marriage of priests.

The new King, Edward VI., a boy of nine, was a puppet in the hands of his uncles, Thomas and Edward Seymour. The supreme authority during the king's minority had originally been vested in the sixteen executors of Henry's will, but the two Seymours, seizing what extra power they could, claimed the entire guardianship of their nephew. They were, the one a simple knight, the other Earl of Hertford and Lord Chamberlain, but not content with these honours, they at once busied themselves with their own advancement. Hertford caused himself to be created Duke of Somerset, while Sir Thomas was made Lord Seymour of Sudley and Lord High Admiral. Further, the new Duke of Somerset had himself proclaimed Protector, and procured letters-patent under the Great Seal, conferring on his person the whole authority of the crown. He, no less than Cranmer, was the close friend of Calvin, and was in frequent correspondence with him, as also with Peter Martyr, Bullinger and other reformers. Somerset wrote to ask Calvin's advice as to the manner in which he should carry out the principles of the Reformation in England, and Calvin replied that he gave thanks to God that the Protector had no need of instruction as to the doctrine he was to uphold, God having enlightened him and given him knowledge, counsel and discretion as to the preaching of the pure Gospel.¹

Cranmer wrote to John à Lasco, one of Calvin's most fervent disciples, inviting him to come over and

¹ *Letters of John Calvin* from May 1528 to May 1564. French edition.

to bring Melancthon with him, "that they might commune together on the building up of religion," being desirous "to transmit to posterity a true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of the sacred writings, so that there may not only be set forth among all nations an illustrious testimony respecting our doctrine, delivered by the grave authority of learned and godly men, but that all posterity may have a pattern to imitate. For the purpose of carrying this important design into execution, we have thought it necessary to have the assistance of learned men, who, having compared their opinions together with us, may do away with all doctrinal controversies, and build up an entire system of true doctrine."¹

Cranmer had formed the project of uniting all the Protestant churches, and was eager to accomplish his purpose. As Calvin and Melancthon refused to come over and consult with him, he set to work with as many others of the Protestant divines as he could muster. Peter Martyr was the first to arrive, and Cranmer made him *regius professor* of divinity at Oxford. Martyr invited Martin Bucer, in a letter in which the following passage occurs: "Transubstantiation is now, I think, exploded. . . . With respect to a change of religion, they can no longer retrace their steps." Bucer arrived in England in April 1549, and received the same professorship at Cambridge as that which Martyr already enjoyed at Oxford. John à Lasco, Stumphius, John of Ulm, and Ochino, an ex-Capuchin friar, were all accommodated with ecclesiastical preferments, and the foreign prelates, formerly presented to English benefices by the Pope, were now represented by reformers professing every variety of opinion on the one subject of the Eucharist, from sacramentarians to those who saw in it nothing but a mere commemoration.

¹ *Original Letters of the English Reformation*, vol. I., p. 16, Parker Society.

Calvin, though absent, imparted his spirit to their deliberations. He wrote, urging Cranmer to renewed activity in eradicating the last vestiges of superstition, and encouraged Edward, whom he styled the young Josias, to persevere in the work begun. He implored him to abolish prayers for the dead and the invocation of saints, and reminded him that having re-established the purity of God's service, it behoved him to break down the high places, that the very memory of the "idolatrous worship" might be destroyed. Accordingly, all this was carried out. The sacrifice of the Mass having been abolished, the destruction of the altars naturally followed, for where there is no sacrifice no altar is needed. Already in 1548 John of Ulm had written to Bullinger: "These idolatrous altars are now become hogsties—that is, the habitation of swine and beasts."¹ The images of saints were also removed from the churches, and the walls whitewashed and adorned with the royal arms. The saints being banished, it was forbidden to keep their feasts. In the meanwhile, the gradual change from the Missal to the Book of Common Prayer had been effected.

Cranmer's first attempt, called *The Communion Book*, discouraged private confession to a priest, and introduced some slight changes into the act of administering Holy Communion. But as these changes were very generally ignored by the priests, it was determined to take active measures to secure "a uniform, quiet, and godly order, rite and fashion of common and open prayer and administration of the sacraments." This determination resulted in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. It contained the new order for *the Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass*, and it preserved to some extent the order and semblance of the Mass, but the Mass shorn of its sacrificial character, all the parts relating to oblation being removed. "The Bill for Religion"

¹ *Original Letters of the Reformation*, vol. II., p. 384. Parker Society.

passed the House of Lords on January 2nd, 1549, and on the 15th of the same month became the law of the land. It not only enforced the use of the new Prayer Book, but proclaimed pains and penalties for those who should oppose the new service. Three bishops—Heath of Worcester, Day of Chichester, and Bonner of London—were sent to prison for refusing to comply with its regulations. Heath had refused his consent *in toto*, Day had disobeyed the order to demolish and replace by tables all the altars in his diocese, Bonner still maintained in a sermon the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Bonner, denounced by Hooper and Latimer, was sent to the Marshalsea, where he remained till released by Mary on her accession. When committed, he wrote to Cranmer: "Three things I have, to wit, a small portion of goods, a poor carcase and mine own soul: the two first ye may take (though unjustly) to you, but as for my soul ye get it not, *quia anima mea in manibus meis semper*."¹

The new service was not foisted on the country without bloodshed. Insurrections broke out in all parts but in Devon and Cornwall, on the first day that the Prayer Book came into use, the people carried all before them. In one parish they compelled the priest to return to the old ritual, declaring that they would have no change of religion till the king was of age. Four thousand Devonshire men perished in the field or by the hand of the executioner. Exeter was besieged for five weeks, and at the end of that time a petition of the western insurgents, when presented to the Lord Privy Seal, read more like an imperious demand for the restitution of their rights than a humble supplication. "We will not receive the new service, because it is like a Christmas game, but we will have our old service of matins, Mass and evensong, and procession in Latin, as it was before;" so ran their protest. Needless to say, they, together with the whole country, were eventually

¹ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. V., p. 791.

"For my soul is ever in my own hands."

crushed into submission, and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and Tunstall of Durham, followed the other three bishops to prison.

But Cranmer's new service was never intended to be final. His opinions, always in a fluid state, were already in advance of his ritual, and before the first Prayer Book had been a year in use it had been thoroughly revised, with the help of the foreign Calvinists and John Knox. In April 1552 the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. was sanctioned by Parliament. This book is in all essentials the same as that used by Anglicans at the present day. Everything which in the first book had been thought capable of a Catholic interpretation was swept away, and of the old form of worship nothing was left but the Collect, Epistle, Gospel and Creed. Even the word "altar," which had sometimes occurred in the first book, was expunged, "table" and "God's board" being substituted. Thus was "built up" that "entire system" which Cranmer desired to see established, and which has obtained in the new national Church of this country for the last 350 odd years.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE EFFECT OF THE REFORMATION ON LEARNING

IT used to be boldly asserted, and it is still believed by a number of people, that when the country adopted the Protestant religion it not only turned spiritually from darkness to light, but that people began to be better educated than they ever had been before, and that schools were founded and endowed, so that no one need any longer be ignorant. The art of printing is regarded by these as an entirely Protestant invention, in order that the open Bible might be in the hands of all.

It is difficult to see how such an error should have come to be believed, since a very little study shows that the reverse of all this was the case. Luther was born in 1483, but the first Bible printed with movable metal type was published at Mainz in 1455, and was followed by other editions in rapid succession.

The first German Bibles were printed at Strassburg in 1466, and one of those is in the possession of his Majesty, Edward VII. In the very year of Luther's birth, William Caxton printed and published a translation in English of nearly the whole Pentateuch and a great part of the Gospels, in fact, nearly the entire Bible, which was probably in use in the churches. Hence the printed Bible must have been familiar to the English people long before the days of Tyndale and Coverdale, Caxton having brought his newly-acquired art to England in 1476, and settled at Westminster, under the protection of the Benedictine monks, setting up his presses within the abbey precincts.

Before Luther completed his translation of the Bible into German in 1534, no fewer than thirty Catholic editions of the Scriptures had appeared in the German vernacular. At the lowest computation more than seventy editions of the whole Bible, not counting the separate editions of the Psalms, the Pentateuch and the Gospels, passed through the printing presses of Europe between 1450, when Gutenberg produced the first printed Bible, and the year 1516, when Erasmus published his New Testament in Latin. Ten at least of these editions were in the mother tongue of different countries, and were fully accessible to the people.

But long before the discovery of printing, the faithful were taught by word of mouth, each bishop providing for the religious instruction of his flock. Archbishop Peckham's celebrated *Constitutions of the Synod of Oxford*, drawn up in 1281, were constantly referred to up to the time of the Reformation as the foundation of the then existing practices of the Church in England. These constitutions provided minutely and amply for the instruction of the people in all that appertained to religion. Moreover, a diocesan synod of the fourteenth century ordered "all rectors, vicars or chaplains holding ecclesiastical offices" to expound clearly and plainly to their people on all Sundays and feast days "the Word of God and the Catholic faith of the apostles." They were to instruct them diligently in the articles of faith, and to teach them in their native language the Apostle's Creed, and urge them to expound and teach the same to their children.¹ Over and above this, the frequent representation of *mystery* plays made the people familiar with the Life, Passion and Death of our Lord, so that they were incomparably better educated in Scripture history and in the truths of the Gospel than are the generality of the poor in our own day.

Let us now compare the state of learning in

¹ Wilkins, III., 11.

England at the eve of the Reformation with the condition of the same fifteen years after the rupture with Rome, and the dissolution of the monasteries.

At the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII., Erasmus, writing from Cambridge, where he was professor of the Greek language, says that "the University can now hold its head with the highest, and has excellent theologians."¹ In a letter from London he declares that "the Court is more like a museum than a court; and as for the queen, she is a miracle of learning." The erudite symposium represented by Linacre, Grocyn, Colet, Pace, Archbishop Warham, and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, was as famous as any learned society in Europe. Linacre and Grocyn had studied in Italy, and on their return had planted the first seeds of the new learning in English soil. This new learning took the form of a fresh impetus in the study of the Greek language and classics. Grocyn taught Greek gratuitously at Oxford, and Erasmus declared him to be "the patron and preceptor of us all." He praised greatly his Ciceronian Latin. Linacre also settled at Oxford, where he too enjoyed a position of great distinction on account of his brilliant Latin scholarship and thorough knowledge of Greek. Sir Thomas More was one of his most learned pupils. Linacre had been tutor to Arthur, Prince of Wales, after whose death he became physician to the king, and founded the Royal College of Physicians; he took orders late in life. Dr. John Colet, dean of St Paul's, gave an impetus to middle-class education by founding his celebrated grammar school, at the head of which he placed the famous William Lilly, who had studied Greek at Rhodes, and was the author of the grammar known by his name.

The abbeys of Reading, Ramsey and Glastonbury were noted for their scholarship. The Benedictines at Oxford kept up a high average of graduates

¹ *Epistles of Erasmus*, vol. XI., p. 10.

between the years 1506 and 1536. Corpus Christi College at the same university was founded in 1516, mainly for the study of Greek. At Cambridge Erasmus was succeeded by the famous scholar, Richard Croke, and to Gonville Hall, as Caius College was then called, each of the greater religious houses in East Anglia sent students to qualify as instructors of novices.

These are but a few instances of the growth of learning, of the flourishing condition of school and cloister, down to the very outbreak of the gigantic revolutionary movement that overturned the settled order of things in Church and State, and plunged the country into chaos; and it is startling to observe the marked and rapid decline in studies at the universities from the very moment of the dissolution of the monasteries. In the thirteen years immediately following on the fatal year 1535, studies at Cambridge reached so low an ebb that their total disappearance was apprehended.¹ This was admitted by the reformers themselves. "It would pity a man's heart," said Hugh Latimer, in a sermon preached before Edward VI. in 1548, "to hear what I hear of the state of Cambridge; what it is in Oxford I cannot tell." And in the following year Roger Ascham complained to Cranmer that his university was so depressed and drooping, "that very few had hopes of coming thither at all, and fewer had any comfort to make long tarrying when they were there, and that abroad it retained not so much as the shadow of its ancient dignity."²

A royal commission visiting both Oxford and Cambridge in 1549 seemed about to do for the universities what had already been done for the monasteries. Dudley, Earl of Warwick, at Oxford, and the Protector Somerset at Cambridge, made short work of the accumulated erudition of centuries.

¹ *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. I., p. 565.

² Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*.

A cartload of manuscripts were destroyed at Merton College. From Balliol, Queen's and Exeter came great heaps of books to be publicly burned at Carfax. In the University library not a single book or manuscript was left, and Dr Cox, dean of Christ Church and chancellor, was for this act of vandalism nicknamed "*Cancellor of the University*."

But all this was only the aftermath. Layton, the chief royal commissioner at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, in passing through Oxford, had made a public holocaust at Carfax of the works of Duns Scotus and other scholastic authors, an act that was tantamount to closing the schools, for canon law, theology, and scholastic philosophy had been the principal studies in which Oxford excelled. Gardiner, from his prison in the Tower, still remaining Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, made every effort in his power to arrest the fusion of Clare Hall with Trinity, but he could do nothing to improve matters or to save the books. The destruction of precious manuscripts which at the dissolution had been carried on wantonly was now vicious. What had then been carelessly spared was now systematically made away with. At Malmesbury leaves were torn from their costly bindings, and used to patch broken windows. Bakers bought them as fuel for heating their ovens, grocers "to lap spices in." The whole intellectual life of England lay a wreck.

It has also been very generally supposed that grammar schools were post-Reformation inventions, and we hear of the foundations of Edward VI. as if he had been a patron of education in some form or other. But if we look into the matter, we find that the only foundation with which he is even reported to have had any connection is Christ's Hospital, and that was not founded as a school, but as a foundling institution. Nearly two hundred grammar schools existed in England before the reign of Edward VI., and these were but the survivors of a far greater

number that had been abolished at the same time as the monasteries. Those that had not been swept away were now plundered. The grammar schools were of great antiquity. Winchester was until recently supposed to be the oldest of them. It was founded in its present form in 1382, but it replaced one that had been in existence before the Norman Conquest. St Peter's School at York was already flourishing in the eighth century, and Worcester Cathedral School as early as 680. There were altogether about three hundred grammar schools in England before the change of religion in the reign of Henry VIII. The only connection between Edward VI. and the education of his people is that he, or rather his representatives, for he had little to say to the things that were done in his name, took away the lands belonging to the schools, and substituted fixed stipends dependent on the Crown, thus dooming most of them to destruction.

CHAPTER XXX

FURTHER MEASURES FOR ENFORCING THE NEW STATE RELIGION

IN 1550 a bill was introduced into Parliament to change the old forms of making and consecrating archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons, so as to get rid of every remaining trace of the sacrificial nature of the priesthood. As many of the Catholic bishops were in prison and deprived of their vote, those who had adopted the new condition of things succeeded in passing the bill by a majority of nine.

If, on the one hand, Edward's government had encountered great difficulty in enforcing the new form of worship on an unwilling people, on the other their energies were taxed to the utmost in their resolve to set limits to the extent innovators might go in repudiating any article of the hitherto received Christian faith. Having once opened the door to rationalism by discarding a divinely appointed authority, it became urgent that they should henceforth arm themselves and their position against those who would deny the truth of any of those portions of the Christian religion which Protestantism still retained. Their only possible weapon lay in the statute *De Heresia*, which Henry IV. framed, and which Mary was afterwards so greatly blamed for reviving. Nevertheless, no one ventured to call in question the right of Edward's representatives to resort to any means, however despotic, of claiming and enforcing obedience, and under this statute Cranmer tried, condemned, and handed over to the civil power a woman named Joan Bocher for denying

the Incarnation of Christ. In passing sentence upon her, the archbishop ordered that she was to be "deservedly punished," which meant that she was to be burned at the stake. He had previously, in Henry's reign, condemned John Lambert and Anne Askew to the flames for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, in which he himself now professed no longer to believe. He also passed sentence in 1549 on John van Parris, and handed him over, with several Anabaptists, to be burned at Smithfield. Edward VI. wrote in his *Journal*, under the date May 2nd, 1549: "Joan Bocher, otherwise called Joan of Kent, was burnt for holding that Christ was not incarnate of the Virgin Mary, being condemned the year before, but kept in hope of conversion, and the 30th April the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Ely were to persuade her. But she withstood them, and reviled the preacher that preached at her death."

During this time the king's sister, the Princess Mary, was living in great retirement at her house in Essex. She rarely appeared at court, and hoped that by attracting little attention she might be allowed to practise her religion unmolested. Such was not, however, the intention of Somerset and the divines who ordered his conduct in matters of religion. Although Mass was now illegal, having been done away with by Act of Parliament, the holy sacrifice was still offered openly in her chapel, till the Protector summoned her also to embrace the new form of worship. Mary, in a spirited reply to this summons, questioned the legality of statutes made during the king's minority against the custom of all Christendom, and in her conscience "against the law of God and His Church, which passeth all the rest."

She was next admonished to send her chaplains and the comptroller of her household to appear before the Privy Council, and this also she refused to do, declaring that the law of uniformity made by Parliament was not worth the name of a law, that her father's executors

were sworn to his statutes, that her house was her flock, and that she deferred in obedience to King Edward's laws till his majesty were of sufficient years. Edward thereupon wrote to his sister, marvelling at her refusal to conform to the new order of common prayer, but giving her leave to have Mass said in her own chamber. This was in deference to the emperor, Charles V., to whom Mary had appealed, Edward's council being in deadly fear lest he should declare war. But a treaty being signed with France, friendship with the emperor was less vital in importance, and the persecution of the princess was renewed. The leave for Mass, which had been granted, as it were, at the point of the sword, was declared to have been limited to a few months only, and to have included none of Mary's servants. The princess was again warned to be conformable and obedient to his Majesty's laws, to give orders that Mass was to be no longer used in her house, and she was exhorted to embrace and to cause to be celebrated in her said house the communion and other divine services set forth by his Majesty.¹

Mary replied that these orders did more trouble her than any bodily sickness, "though it were even to the death," and after assuring the king that she would prove as true to him as any subject within his realm, she continued, "[I] will by no means stand in argument with your Majesty, but in most humble wise beseech you, even for God's sake, to suffer me as your Highness hath done hitherto. It is for no worldly respect I desire it, God is my judge, but rather than offend my conscience I would desire of God to lose all that I have, and also my life, and nevertheless live and die your humble sister and servant."²

After writing this letter Mary went to see her brother at Westminster, and Edward, in making a note of the interview in his journal, after putting on

¹ John Roche Dasent, *Acts of the Privy Council*, vol. II., p. 291. New series.

² Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. VI., p. 12.

record his protest against the Mass, said: "She answered that her soul was God's, and her faith she would not change, nor dissemble her opinion with contrary doings."¹

Charles V. subsequently made a further attempt to help his cousin, but the law of uniformity once passed, Edward's ministers could only seek to justify themselves by enforcing it logically. Although, however, many persons were examined as to whether they had heard Mass lately or not, and punishments were dealt out freely to those who had, it was not until August 1551 that definite steps were taken to coerce Mary into subjection.

On the 15th August three of her servants, including Sir Francis Englefield, comptroller of her household, were summoned to appear before the Privy Council, and commanded, on their return home, to inhibit the Lady Mary's chaplains from further saying Mass in her house, or in any other place, under pain of the king's high indignation and displeasure. They were to appear again on the 24th, and to give an account of their doings. But on the 24th they had nothing to report but Mary's indignant protest against any interference with the religion of her household. The princess, they related, had ended her speech to them in these words: "And if my chaplains do say no Mass, I can hear none, no more can my poor servants, but as for my servants, I know it shall be against their wills, as it shall be against mine, for if they could come where it were said, they would hear it with good will. And as for my priests, they know what they have to do. The pain of your law is but imprisonment for a short time, and if they will refuse to say Mass for fear of that imprisonment, they may do therein as they will, but none of your new service shall be used in my house, and if any be said in it I will not tarry in the house."

Mary's servants were sent to the Tower for disobey-

¹ *Journal of King Edward's Reign*, p. 21.

ing the behests of the Privy Council, and commissioners arrived at her house and gave her chaplains "strait commandment, upon pain of their allegiance, that neither the priests should from henceforth say any Mass or other divine service than that which is set forth by the laws of the realm."¹

Nevertheless, for some reason or reasons, Edward's ministers suddenly changed their tactics so far as Mary was concerned, and instead of continuing to harass her, they allowed her to practise her religion in peace. Ridley, bishop of London, paid her a friendly visit in September 1552, and the conversation which Foxe records as having taken place between them, shows the perfect freedom which she then enjoyed. She received Ridley courteously, and talked with him for a quarter of an hour, reminding him that she had known him when he was her father's chaplain, and she mentioned a sermon which he had preached at a certain wedding. She then dismissed him to dine with her household.

After dinner, perhaps mindful of her allusion to his former sermon, he offered to preach to her in the church, upon which she replied that he might preach, but that neither she herself nor any of hers would listen.

"Madam, I trust that you will not refuse God's Word," expostulated the bishop.

"I cannot tell what ye call God's Word," answered the Lady Mary, "that is not God's Word now which was God's Word in my father's days."

"God's Word is all one in all times, but is better understood and preached in some ages than in others," answered Ridley.

"You durst not for your ears have avouched that for God's Word that now ye do," retorted Mary, "and as for your new books, I thank God I never read any of them; I never did nor ever will do."

In taking leave of him she said:

"My lord, for your gentleness to come and see me

¹ Dasent, *Acts of the Privy Council*, vol. III., p. 384.

I thank you, but for your offering to preach before me I thank you never a whit."

Before leaving, he drank a stoup of wine as a stirrup cup, according to custom, with Mary's steward, but suddenly breaking off he exclaimed :

"I have done amiss ; I have drunk in that place where God's Word offered hath been refused. I ought, if I had done my duty, to have departed immediately, and to have shaken the dust off my shoes for a testimony against this house."¹

¹ *Acts and Monuments*, vol. VI., p. 354.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE BREAKING UP OF THE EDWARDIAN CHURCH

AT the death of Edward VI., in 1553, the Established Church was pledged to a very pronounced type of Calvinism, and there was nothing in it to indicate that it was at the eve of a return to the position from which it had been torn by Henry VIII. But Mary's accession at once brought about a stirring change, and all those who had been secretly discontented with the new order of things came to the front. As Edward had died a Protestant, Cranmer conducted his funeral service in Westminster Abbey according to the Protestant rite, while Mary had a solemn dirge sung for the repose of his soul in St John's chapel in the Tower. These services were held simultaneously, 300 members of the nobility assisting at the dirge in the queen's suite. And while Mary expressly declared that it was not her intention to compel any to readopt the religion of their ancestors, it was from the first clearly understood that she intended to restore the Catholic religion, at least to what it had been in her father's time, and the foreign reformers, among whom was the notorious Peter Martyr, made haste to leave the kingdom. The intruded bishops of Winchester, Wells, Chichester, Exeter and Ossory, the deans of Christ Church, Westminster, Exeter, Durham, Wells and Chichester, all promptly retired to the various headquarters of Protestantism, at Strassburg, Antwerp, Worms, Frankfort, Geneva and Zürich. Meanwhile the queen had released from prison Bishops Bonner, Tunstall, Gardiner, Heath and Day, and restored them to their sees. Stephen Gardiner,

Bishop of Winchester, was made chancellor. At the entreaty of her cousin, the Emperor Charles V., Mary abstained from the public reinstatement of Mass till Parliament had met and consented to the act; but so eager were the people, that it was sung at St Paul's and in at least two other churches in London on August 24th, 1553, within six weeks of Mary's accession. On the following Sundays Catholic worship was offered in three parish churches in the metropolis, to the great joy and consolation of many. Nevertheless a powerful minority were violently opposed to the return of the old religion. London had become the refuge of all the discontented and revolutionary elements in the country, and was to distinguish itself during the short reign of Mary as the least loyal city of the realm. Even at the very beginning something like a riot took place on the occasion of an unauthorised celebration of Mass in a church near the Horsemarket; and when the archdeacon of St Paul's attempted to preach at Paul's Cross, fresh disturbances arose. The queen's task was a difficult one; on the one hand, it was scarcely possible to restrain the zeal of those who were in haste to restore the Catholic faith, and on the other, the emperor was always urging delay and caution. Reginald Pole, who had been outlawed for his opposition to the divorce of Mary's father and mother, now wrote from Rome imploring the queen to lose no time in re-entering with her people the bark of Peter, and in making restitution to the Church of the property that had been stolen from her.

The Pope made Cardinal Pole his legate, and despatched him to England for the purpose of reconciling the nation to the Papacy. But his opinion as to the expediency of swift action differing from that of the emperor, who feared that Pole's advice to Mary on this and other subjects would clash with his own, Charles contrived to detain him in the Netherlands till all dread of his interference with the imperial policy was at an end.

In the meanwhile, all eyes were fixed on Cranmer. It is more than probable that had he remained quiet he would have been suffered to retire into private life or to betake himself to the continent, like so many of his co-religionists, but a report being spread to the effect that he had once more said Mass in Canterbury Cathedral, he took the opportunity to protest violently, and to inveigh against the Mass, the document which he put forth on the subject being copied in all the scrivener's shops in London. It was widely circulated, and posted up in Cheapside. For this he was summoned to appear before Mary's council, and was gently reproved by Bishop Heath, who invited him to retract what he had said, but he replied :

"As I do not deny myself to be the very author of that bill or letter, so must I confess here unto you that I am sorry that the said bill went from me in such sort as it did. For when I had written it, Master Scory got the copy of me, and it is now come abroad, and as I understand, the city is full of it. For which I am sorry that it is so passed my hands, for I had intended otherwise to have made it in a more large and ample manner, and minded to have set it on Paul's church door, and on the doors of all the churches in London, with mine own seal joined thereto."¹

All the efforts of the council to help him out of the dangerous position in which he had placed himself being stultified by his determination not to be helped, there was nothing further to be done but to allow him to take the consequences of his acts. He was ordered to appear the next day in the Star Chamber, and after a long and serious debate he was sent to the Tower, "as well for the treason committed by him against the queen's Highness (for his share in Lady Jane Grey's usurpation), as for the aggravating the same his offence

¹ Harleian MS. 422, British Museum ; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. VI., p. 539 ; Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, vol. I., p. 437.

by spreading abroad seditious bills, moving tumults to the disquietness of the present State.¹ Opportunities for flight were given to him, and the government connived at his escape, as also at the escape of Hugh Latimer, "indicted for seditious behaviour," but neither took advantage of the loophole, and both were consequently lodged in the Tower.

Joyful as were the many at the restoration of the Catholic religion, the Calvinist minority were strong and bitter in their opposition, and Mary's foreign enemy, the King of France, was only too ready through his ambassador to stir the coals of sedition, and to harass and hamper the queen in every possible way. A unique occasion soon presented itself.

It was considered necessary, in order to secure a Catholic succession, that the queen should marry. The emperor, to whose counsels she always deferred, urged her to take his son Philip, heir to the throne of Spain, and Mary was inclined to listen to this advice, demurring only at the age of the prince, he being eleven years younger than herself. The negotiations for the marriage proceeded, although Mary's best friends, among whom was her chancellor, Stephen Gardiner, were resolutely opposed to it. Their principal reasons against the union were its unpopularity in England, and the danger lest Mary should be drawn into the war which was, even then, brewing between France and Spain. Its unpopularity arose from dread of Philip's introducing the Spanish inquisition into England, as it had been introduced into the Netherlands, and of England's degenerating into a mere appanage of the Spanish monarchy. The only real cause for alarm lay in the danger of a foreign war, an apprehension that was justified in the event. But it was to the interest of the French king to prevent the marriage by all the means at his disposal, in order that he might not have to fight two powers instead of one enemy, and he instructed his

¹ *Acts of the Privy Council*, vol. IX., p. 347. New series.

ambassador in England to encourage to the utmost the disaffected among the queen's subjects, who made the Spanish marriage their watchword. The Princess Elizabeth was constantly brought forward as the champion of Protestantism, although she had outwardly conformed to the queen's religion, and when Sir Thomas Wyatt unfurled the banner of revolt, her name was prominent in the plans laid for future action, should their cause triumph. But while the insurgents aimed at placing her on the throne, Henry II. intended it for his daughter-in-law, Mary Queen of Scots, who after Mary Tudor was the next legitimate heiress, through her grandmother, the eldest sister of Henry VIII.

Worked upon by the French ambassador, the discontented and the ignorant confused their queen's projected marriage with purely religious questions, and in defiance of all reason, attacked the Catholic religion because it was that of Spain. A circular letter from Mary to her council declared that "certain ill-disposed persons, meaning, under the pretence of misliking this marriage, to rebel against the Catholic religion and divine service restored within this our realm, and to take from us, their Sovereign Lady and Queen, that liberty which is not denied to the meanest women in the choice of their husbands, cease not to spread many false, vile and untrue reports of our said cousin and others of that nation." But the plans of the French king and those of the English rebels were soon nipped in the bud, and mainly through the queen's courage and resolution. All that they gained by the revolt was the execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband, who had again allowed themselves to be drawn into the Duke of Suffolk's seditious schemes, while Wyatt before his death as a traitor distinctly implicated Elizabeth in his rising.

The rebellion having been suppressed, the marriage treaty with Spain was now carried out, and Philip

landed in England on July 19th, 1554. Henceforth Charles V. had no further reason for detaining Cardinal Pole in his dominions, and the legate, after certain necessary preliminaries, was allowed to continue his journey to England.

CHAPTER XXXII

REUNION WITH ROME IN THE REIGN OF MARY I.

MARY'S first Parliament established her legitimacy by declaring the marriage of her parents good and valid, and subsequently a bill was laid before both Houses for the repeal of all the Acts made against religion in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. This bill was passed after a debate which lasted for eight days, the opposition to it arising from a fear lest a demand should be made for the restoration of ecclesiastical property. The queen had been crowned at Westminster by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, the see of Canterbury being vacant on account of Cranmer's apostasy; and by her coronation oath Mary had promised to uphold the rights of the Holy See. This the greedy incumbents of Church lands took to mean that they would be called upon to disgorge the spoils of the monasteries. Sir John Russell, first Earl of Bedford, who had been enriched in this way by Henry VIII., fell into a violent passion, and wrenching his rosary from his girdle, threw it into the fire, exclaiming that he valued his fair abbey of Woburn more than fatherly counsel that should come from Rome.¹ And the Earl of Bedford was fairly representative of a whole class, who, until they were reassured on this point, were the reverse of keen to be reconciled to an authority which in strict justice would require them to restore their plunder.

Thus things were much as they had been in the latter years of Henry VIII., and Mary was even

¹ Cole MS., British Museum. Printed in the *Portfolio of a Man of Letters*.

obliged to assume temporarily the title of Head of the Church until it was formally restored to the Pope by the ceremonious return of England to the centre of unity. It was, however, enacted that the oath of supremacy should not be exacted from ecclesiastics, that priests were not to be allowed to marry, and that those who were already married should be removed from their benefices. The festivals of the Church were restored, and the obligation to hear Mass on Sundays and holidays was set forth.

This was all that could be attempted in the Parliament of 1553. In the autumn of 1554 Philip II., having convinced Reginald Pole through his ambassador at Brussels that a general and immediate restitution of Church property was out of the question, the legate hastened to inform the Pope, who signed a bull empowering him to give, alienate and transfer to the actual holders all goods torn from the Church during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. The measure was considered justifiable, in the hope of winning the souls of those who had been thus enriched, and that it might prove the means of bringing England back to the true faith. Pole's attainder was then reversed by Parliament, and the exile was free to return to his native land. He was received at Dover with the honours due to a royal person, and sailed up the Thames in the queen's barge, his silver cross at the prow, accompanied by a whole flotilla of smaller boats flying gala colours. At the landing-place at Westminster, Gardiner was waiting to receive him and conduct him to the palace. The king and queen were at dinner, but they rose from table to greet him at the head of the great staircase.

Three days later the Lords and Commons were summoned to court by a royal message, and the legate, addressing them in a long speech, acknowledged the act of justice done to him, invited the nation to a sincere repentance of its past errors, and exhorted

both Houses to receive with joy the reconciliation which he was charged by Christ's Vicegerent here on earth to impart to them. As they by repealing Acts made against him had once more opened his country to him, so he was invested with full power to receive them back into the Church of God. Gardiner then spoke, beginning with the words: "The Lord shall raise up a prophet to thee from amongst thine own brethren." He alluded to himself as having been foremost among the delinquents, urged them to rise from their fallen state, and to seek reconciliation with the common parent of all Christians.

On the following day the motion for reunion was made in the House of Lords, and not a dissentient voice was raised against it. In the Commons only two members demurred, and these afterwards withdrew their opposition. A petition was drawn up expressing their regret for the defection of the realm from communion with the Apostolic See, and their desire to be received back into the fold of the Church. On the 30th November the king sent the Earl of Arundel with six knights of the garter and six prelates to escort the legate to the House of Lords. He took his place at the queen's right hand, Philip being somewhat nearer on her left. The Commons having been sent for, Gardiner recapitulated his former speech, asking all present to ratify his words if they desired to return to the unity of the Church and to the obedience owed to her chief Pastor. He was answered by the shouts and acclamations of the whole assembly. He then handed the petition that had been drawn up by Parliament as representative of the nation to the king and queen, and when it had been read and returned to the Lord Chancellor, he read it aloud in the hearing of all. Both Houses then rose as one man and moved towards the papal legate. Pole, on his part, stepped forward to meet them, while the queen, in her own name and in that of the nation, petitioned him to grant them the pardon and recon-

ciliation sued for. The legate reminded them of the thanks due to divine Providence for this further proof of forbearance, and of the favour shown to England. Then the whole assembly fell prostrate, except the king and queen, and Cardinal Pole pronounced the absolution—"from all heresy and schism, and all judgments, censures and penalties for that cause incurred; and restored them to the communion of holy Church, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." "Amen" resounded from every part of the House, and the members, rising from their knees, followed the royal procession into the chapel, where a solemn *Te Deum* was sung in thanksgiving.¹

On the first Sunday of Advent Cardinal Pole made his public entry into the city, and heard High Mass at St Paul's. It was on this occasion that Gardiner preached his famous sermon, in which he accused himself of his want of fidelity under Henry VIII., and exhorted all who had fallen with him or through his evil example now to rise with him and return to the faith of their fathers. On the following Thursday both Houses of Convocation waited on the cardinal legate at Lambeth, and kneeling, received absolution from all their "perjuries, schism and heresies."² Both Philip and the legate hastened to inform the Pope of these proceedings, both auguring great good for the future of the country. Julius III. replied by sending to Mary the Golden Rose, and to Philip the sword and hat which sometimes accompanied it, when the Pope desired to honour in an especial manner two royal personages.

Following upon these events the work of resettling religion upon a firm basis was promptly undertaken. Cardinal Pole convoked a synod, wherein many wise regulations were made for the renovation of ecclesi-

¹ *Journal of the House of Commons*, 38. *Pole's Correspondence*, Appendix, 315-318.

² The Act 1 and 2 Philip and Mary for restoring the Pope's supremacy was passed in January 1555.

astical discipline. Decrees were passed forbidding pluralities and non-residence, simoniacal malpractices and any secular business whatever. Measures were set on foot for the regular instruction of children and adults in the dogmas of religion. A new translation of the Bible was undertaken, and a new catechism was planned. Everywhere fresh life and energy sprang up where desolation had reigned, and the Word of God was again heard from pulpits that had long been silent or had resounded only to the voice of heresy and schism.¹ Given a little freedom from intrigue, a little honest good-will in the place of that distrust, unrest and irreverence which was the outcome of the religious history of the nation for the last twenty years, and the reign of Mary might have been glorious in the annals of England. But perhaps she herself was scarcely conscious of the whole change that had been wrought by the consequences of two decades of revolution and religious anarchy.

¹ Wilkins, *Conc.* IV., p. 121 Phillips, *Life of Cardinal Pole*, vol. II., p. 176.

CHAPTER XXXIII

TROUBLE IN CHURCH AND STATE

ENGLAND had been restored *en bloc* to the true fold. Mary had wiped off the statute-book the heretical Acts of her father and brother; the nation once more acknowledged the Pope as head of the Church;¹ divine worship was again offered as it had been ever since England was a Christian country, and the monastic system that had suffered so cruelly under Henry VIII. was beginning to strike fresh roots in the land wherein it had formerly so exceedingly flourished. This much the queen had succeeded in doing; what she could not do was to remove the effects of all that had transpired since her father had broken away from Rome. Indeed, such would have been beyond human power to bring about; consequences necessarily follow deeds; wounds must produce scars, and it is obvious that men can only reap what they have sown. Heresy nurtured by greed had long been preached from every pulpit, and was now rampant. Thrust now from the sanctuary, it circulated its poison among the populace. It held out the hand of fellowship to traitors, and made common cause with the enemies of the realm.

When tumults arose because of the restoration of Mass, when a priest was stabbed at the altar, and two of the queen's chaplains were stoned, when the queen herself was denounced by street preachers for bringing back the religion which they had thought exterminated, opinion was divided as to whether the

¹ The Act 1 and 2 Philip and Mary, ch. 8, for restoring the Pope's supremacy was passed in January 1555.

culprits were guilty of heresy or rebellion. They were in fact guilty of both, but it would have been wiser and more prudent to have followed the advice of the emperor in this instance, and to have had all such miscreants punished as rebels. Unfortunately they were treated as heretics, which gave them the much coveted opportunity of posing as martyrs. Mary's Parliament of 1554, which abolished her title of supreme head of the Church of England, threw out the bill for reviving the statute of 1401 against heretics, but it was brought in again in the following January, and in four days it had passed through both Houses without opposition. One of the reformers had prayed publicly that God would "either convert the heart of the queen or take her out of this world," and it was then felt that a breakwater had become imperatively necessary to stop the inflowing tide of sedition. It was made treason to pray in public for the queen's death, but while the council were debating on the manner in which the law should be enforced, Mary sent them a message, in which, among other things, she said :—

"Touching punishment of heretics, me thinketh it ought to be done without rashness, not leaving in the meanwhile to do justice to such as by learning would seem to deceive the simple : and the rest so to be used that the people might well perceive them not to be condemned without just occasion, whereby they shall both understand the truth and beware to do the like ; and especially within London I would wish none to be burnt without some of the council's presence, and both there and everywhere good sermons at the same."¹ This third revival of the Act of Parliament *De Heresia* within twenty years (it had been, as we have seen, revived both under Henry VIII. and Edward VI.) was the work of Mary's council, who saw in it the one means of extirpating heresy and sedition, root and branch. They were convinced

¹ Rawdon Brown, *Venetian Calendar*, vol. VI., p. 3, app. 136.

that false doctrine was the cause of the ever-recurring unrest, and of the tumults which disturbed the peace of the realm, especially in the south and south-east, where the new sects mostly congregated. But the queen herself was inclined to think with Charles V. and Philip that disaffection was at the bottom of the religious disturbances, and she agreed with reluctance to the enforcing of the statute. Hence her injunction to the Privy Council. The bishops, and notably Bonner and Gardiner, were averse from the revival of the Act, but Parliament decreed it, and "it was not therefore the policy of the Church, but of the Crown," remarks an authority on English law, "and not merely of the Crown, but of the State. It was the act of the Crown with the authority of Parliament and the assent of the council."¹ In another place the same writer says :² "With reference to this unhappy persecution, it appears important to observe that it was not the will of the Church, but of the State, that it was the result not of the religious bigotry of ecclesiastics, but of State policy . . . it was not only not instigated, but it was rather discouraged by the prelates ; and although it was no doubt authorised by the sovereign, it was at the advice of her council, composed chiefly of laymen. The cardinal legate opposed it, the king's confessor preached against it, the prelates acted only on compulsion ; and there is reason to believe from the queen's reply to the representations of her council that she rather yielded to their advice, and desired the execution of the measure not only to be moderated, but to be directed rather against popular agitators than against mere private holders of heretical opinions."

The most notable of those who were executed under the statute of heresy were the bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer and Hooper. But Cranmer had

¹ Reeve's History of the English Law, edited by F. W. Finlayson, vol. III., p. 514, note.

² *Ibid.*, p. 560, note.

already been found guilty of high treason. His abject submission to the Lords of the Council of Regency led him to sign Edward's will, which had been drawn up by Northumberland, and had Mary really possessed the vindictive feelings attributed to her, she had ample pretext on her accession for ordering his apprehension. But it was not until some time after the rebellion in favour of Lady Jane Grey, when Cranmer had further signalised himself by an act of open and aggressive opposition to her measures, that his liberty was interfered with. This was his celebrated *Declaration* against the sacrifice of the Mass, which led to his being summoned before the council.¹ He was committed to the Tower for having caused the Lady Jane to be proclaimed queen, and with having sent armed men to Cambridge to aid Northumberland in his rebellion, and "as well for the treason committed by him against the queen's highness as for the aggravating the same, his offence by spreading abroad seditious bills, moving tumults to the disquietness of the present state."²

At first Cranmer pleaded not guilty, but afterwards he withdrew the plea and confessed to the indictment. He was then sentenced to death for high treason, and would have been executed at Tyburn on this count but for Mary's intervention. Together with Latimer and Ridley he was sent to Oxford to dispute with the most learned divines in both Universities. Here they were presented with three articles drawn up by convocation, setting forth the doctrine of the Mass. All three bishops refused to sign them, and a disputation was appointed. The prolocutor, Dr Weston, opened the proceedings by a sermon on the unity of the Church, which he accused Cranmer of having violated by making, as it were, every year a new faith. The assembled doctors were commissioned to restore him to the unity of the Church. At the disputation which

¹ For the text of Cranmer's *Declaration*, see appendix, p. 276.

² Acts of the Privy Council, vol. IV., p. 347. New series.

followed, Dr Chedsey, prebendary of St Paul's, was Cranmer's chief opponent, and kept up the discussion for nearly six hours. Those who were present considered that he had proved his argument successfully, and the assembly dispersed shouting, "Truth has triumphed!" But Cranmer wrote an account of what passed, and complained that he had been unfairly treated in debate, and begged for the queen's pardon, *i.e.*, leave to reopen the subject. This was granted, his new opponents being Dr Weston and John Harpsfield. But again it was declared that neither Cranmer nor Ridley and Latimer had successfully maintained their thesis, and they were sent back to prison, where they remained for eighteen months, being continually urged to recant their errors. It was then resolved that they should have a formal trial for heresy. Cranmer, as primate of England, was tried separately. A report of his trial was sent to Rome, whereupon he wrote to the queen, complaining that his "own natural sovereign" had cited him "before a foreign tribunal."

After many delays, judgment for heresy was at last pronounced against him in the papal courts, but his sentence of degradation from his orders was not carried out for five months, in the hope that he might recant, and no efforts were spared to save him. But in vain, and the solemn degradation from all the degrees of the hierarchy, conducted by Bonner, Bishop of London, and Thirlby, Bishop of Exeter, took place on February 14th, 1556. Even then Thirlby petitioned the queen on his behalf, and a pardon was contemplated in view of two separate forms of submission which he had drawn up. But the council decided that he should suffer "for example's sake," and the law was allowed to take its course. In the six weeks that intervened before his execution Cranmer signed in all seven recantations, declaring that he did so "without fear and without hope of favour, for the discharge of his conscience, and as a warning to others," abjuring

his errors, and beseeching the people, the queen and the Pope to pray for his "wretched soul." It was expected that he would read the last of these recantations at the stake, but at the last hour he repudiated them all, and expressed repentance for having written "contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and writ for fear of death."¹ He summoned up enough courage to die, but had proved himself so base a dissembler, that no confidence could have been placed in any of his recantations, even if he had stuck to them. His end seems indeed piteous to us, but he suffered according to the notions of his day, according to his own principles in dealing with others, and for causes which he had himself once considered sufficient for death. He had not only sent people to the stake for the same opinions which he afterwards professed, but had also burned Protestants because their Protestantism differed from his own. We do not find that his death excited surprise or regret among his contemporaries.

Ridley and Latimer had been burned on October 19th, 1555, in spite of every effort to save them. Pardon was offered them at the stake if they would recant even then, but they refused, and died exhorting each other to firmness.

In the meanwhile, a further conspiracy had been discovered in the eastern counties, and instructions were accordingly given to the magistrates to watch over the public peace, to apprehend the propagators of seditious reports, the preachers of erroneous doctrines, and those who convened secret meetings. The first prosecutions were conducted by Gardiner, as chancellor, but he soon handed over the duty to Bonner, who also dealt most reluctantly with those who were brought up before him, as indeed did all the bishops whose duty it was to sit in judgment on these cases of heresy. Those who were charged were generally among the most ignorant, and came from

¹ Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, vol. I., p. 557.

the lowest ranks; they were the victims of violent demagogues and sowers of sedition, and in their turn spread abroad inflammatory notions subversive of all government and order, and which repeatedly brought the country to actual revolt. Cardinal Pole, who succeeded Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury, took but a small part in the prosecutions, but he was active in restoring order and discipline to his distracted diocese. Nevertheless, conspiracies multiplied daily throughout the southern and eastern counties, and the methods adopted by the council for their suppression only increased their frequency and the insolence of the aggressors. Heresy and political disaffection were convertible terms. The martyrologist Foxe, who made it his business to plead the cause of his co-religionists by villifying their judges, would have us believe that Bonner entertained a furious personal grudge against those who were brought before him to be examined, and his book teems with epithets which are as unjustifiable as they are eloquent. But the truth is that Bonner was the reverse of zealous in enforcing the law. His functions were purely judicial, and it does not anywhere appear, even on Foxe's showing, that he was guided by passion, or that he overstepped his prerogative. A document proceeding from the king and queen in council, reprimanding Bonner for his inaction, and admonishing him to travail with disordered persons as Christian charity required, or to proceed against them in order of justice,¹ testifies to his want of energy in the matter.

About 200 persons suffered death by burning during Mary's reign, and of these about 120 came under Bonner's jurisdiction, although Foxe declared that the Bishop of London, "this cannibal," "slew" 300 of them. But Foxe has so often been proved untrustworthy, so many instances of his glaring inaccuracy have been given, and being in exile during nearly the

¹ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vol. VII., p. 86.

whole of Mary's reign, he was so obviously incapable of receiving evidence at first hand, that to refute his misstatements in these days is like going out to slay the three times slain.¹

Something may be said here on the subject of persecution for religious opinions, and first, it must be understood that the great repugnance and abhorrence with which it inspires us in these days are entirely of modern growth. The sixteenth century knew no such sentiments in respect of human life, death or bodily suffering. Cranmer's dealings with those who differed from him in religious opinion have already been mentioned, and the way in which these same principles recoiled upon himself. Both in England and Scotland the Reformation signalised itself by a law which made it penal for any priest to say Mass, for any worshipper to hear it, under punishment of death for the one, of confiscation of his goods, heavy fines, exile, and finally death for the other. Calvin, writing to the Duke of Somerset in 1548 "of stubborn people in the superstitions of the Antichrist of Rome," said that they did altogether "deserve to be well punished by a sword, seeing they do conspire against the king and against God, who had set him up in the royal seat, and of all things let there be no moderation."²

The advice was sincere, and Calvin was prepared to follow it himself, since he caused a Spaniard to be publicly burned at Geneva for differing from his own notions concerning the Blessed Trinity. In 1572 the two Houses of Convocation implored Elizabeth to put Mary Queen of Scots to death, giving as one reason that she had endeavoured to seduce God's people to idolatry, and that according to the Bible all who did so should be put to death.³ Moreover, the Scottish

¹ For a detailed criticism of the martyrologist's methods, see "Foxe's Book of Errors," in *Studies from Court and Cloister*, by J. M. Stone.

² MSS. Edward VI., vol. V.

³ Froude, *History of England*, vol. X., p. 360.

bishops, with the approval of the Established Church of England, during nearly the whole period that the Stuarts were on the throne, directed a persecution, rivalling in atrocity almost any on record, against the Presbyterians.¹ What Catholics suffered for their religion at the hands of Elizabeth will be related in the following chapters. We will now for one moment consider what was in the Middle Ages the Catholic position in regard to the punishment for heresy.

Truth being of divine revelation, an objective fact, quite independent of individual opinion, it might not be assailed with impunity. The Church was its divinely appointed guardian. It was more precious than life itself, therefore he who was found guilty of poisoning the channels through which it was transmitted to the people, was more culpable than a murderer, for he aimed not at this mortal and transitory life, but at the life of the soul destined by God to an eternity of happiness.² In an age when coiners and forgers were punished with death, it would have seemed incongruous that apostates and heretics should fare more softly. The reformers who rejected so many of the doctrines held by the Church were almost all agreed in retaining the punishment by which those doctrines had been vindicated. But while the Catholic Church punished heretics in defence of that truth of which she was the authorised guardian, Protestants persecuted those who differed from their opinions, they having claimed for themselves the right to choose such doctrines as seemed good in their own eyes, repudiating authority in matters of belief, and often differing widely from each other as to essentials.

¹ Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. I., p. 45.

² See the *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas Aquinas, Part 2a, 2æ, Quæst. I, art. 3.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE ELIZABETHAN SETTLEMENT

IT would have been passing strange, considering Elizabeth's antecedents, if Anne Boleyn's daughter had possessed any serious convictions on the subject of religion. To a childhood of cruel neglect had succeeded a girlhood of vanity, loose morals and callous indifference to the law of God.

Katharine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII., was even during the king's lifetime inclined to the new doctrines, a taste which it is said once nearly cost her her head; but when after Henry's death she allied herself with the Protestant Seymours, and married the lord High Admiral, that leaning was allowed full play. The Seymours' household became Elizabeth's home, and as the practice of the Protestant religion was compulsory under Edward VI., Elizabeth naturally conformed to it. Admiral Seymour had formerly aspired to her hand, but Elizabeth, in disdaining him as a husband, was not averse from his suit as a lover, and the story of their amours, only too well authenticated, forms one of the most disgraceful pages in the history of this period. The unhappy Katharine, a daily witness of the treachery carried on under her roof, succumbed to her grief, and died in child-bed in 1548.

Soon after Mary's accession Elizabeth professed willingness to be instructed in the Catholic religion. She attended Mass daily, and when implored by the queen at the end of her sad life to speak out her whole mind and declare her utter belief, Elizabeth swore that the earth might open and swallow her up if she were not indeed a true Roman Catholic. Nevertheless, few

believed in her sincerity. She had seized every opportunity of conspiring with the queen's enemies and the enemies of her religion. Indeed, all her interests lay with the revolutionists. Herself the child of the revolution, she knew that Catholic Europe looked askance at her pretensions, while not even her best friends pretended that her birth was legitimate, though the whole nation accepted the decree of Henry VIII., which placed her third in the succession. This decree Edward's council had vainly tried to upset by putting forward the Lady Jane Grey. The next legitimate heiress after Henry's daughter Mary was Mary Queen of Scots, who was married to the Dauphin, and in the event of her succeeding to the English throne, there was danger that England might become a mere appendage to France. This circumstance was alone sufficient to evoke a burst of patriotic enthusiasm, which was all in favour of Elizabeth, and contributed to her immense popularity. Her Catholic subjects trusted blindly to her assurances, while she in her turn counted on their patriotism, and on the newly-born self-consciousness in Englishmen as a nation to maintain her difficult position in the teeth of European contempt of her claims.

Clever, tyrannical and vain, she was so entirely the counterpart of Henry VIII. that it is absurd to pretend, as some have pretended, that she was not his daughter. Her policy, moreover, was a repetition of his, with different issues at stake, and she played the game of bluff at least as well as he did. The Bishop of Winchester was arrested for his funeral panegyric of Queen Mary. The Bishop of Carlisle, while vesting for Mass in the royal chapel on Christmas Day, was ordered not to elevate the Host. As he refused to obey, saying the queen should be mistress of his goods and his life, but not of his conscience, Elizabeth rose and left the chapel after the Gospel.¹ This was the first

¹ The Rev. T. Bridgett, *Queen Elizabeth and the Catholic Hierarchy*, p. 64. Camden 32, 33.

indication of the changes that were to follow, and the Catholics began to tremble. Her coronation was fixed for January 14th, 1559, and intense apprehension was felt. The bishops met and deliberated, all agreeing that they dared not anoint and crown one who, in spite of her declaration that she still belonged to the old religion, showed a determination to re-establish the new. At last, however, Oglethorpe, Bishop of Carlisle, consented to perform the coronation ceremony on condition that Elizabeth promised to take the customary oath to maintain the laws, honour, peace and privileges of the Church as they existed in the time of Edward the Confessor. Promises never cost Elizabeth anything; on this occasion she agreed to all that was required of her, and conformed in all things to the ancient Catholic rite. She took the oath, received the sacred unction, communicated under one kind—and then strode forward in her work of destroying all that she had sworn to uphold.¹

Nothing was done that had not already been planned by Elizabeth and her council during the first few weeks after her accession, Cecil's subtle policy being ably seconded by the queen's astuteness and lack of all principle. It was a conspiracy that took into account every possible point of resistance, and provided against it with unscrupulous care.

Parliament met on January 25th. The opening ceremony included the celebration of the Mass of the Holy Ghost, according to ancient custom, but the sermon preached on the occasion was by the notorious Calvinist, Dr Cox, formerly tutor to Edward VI., an apostate priest. An Act was passed abolishing the supremacy of the Pope and substituting that of the Crown—this was the famous Act of Supremacy. By the Act of Uniformity the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. was commanded to be used throughout the realm in the place of the Mass; and by means of these two powerful engines, an upper and a nether

¹ Sander, Vatican MS., f. 258.

millstone, the Catholic religion was by degrees crushed out of the nation.

In order to secure a majority in the House of Commons, the government had taken pains to ensure the return of members upon whose vote they could count, and in the House of Lords five new peers, known to be favourable to the measures it was proposed to carry, were hastily created.¹ Moreover, ten bishoprics were vacant, a circumstance that also played into the hands of the government at this critical moment, and proved disastrous to the Catholic cause, although the sixteen remaining bishops were all faithful. What they could do they did, and the two Houses of Convocation, summoned to the rescue, drew up a declaration of faith, which is still interesting as the last solemn statement of the Catholic Church of England. It affirmed the belief of that Church in transubstantiation, in the sacrificial character of the Mass, and it boldly asserted that to blessed Peter and to his lawful successors in the Apostolic See, as Vicars of Christ, was given the supreme power of feeding and ruling the Church of Christ upon earth, and of confirming their brethren.² Thus, with its very last breath, the Church Catholic in England repeated the refrain of faith and devotion which it had constantly uttered throughout the ages. Henry VIII. had surprised and terrorised the bishops into momentary submission. There had been no precedent how to act in such a crisis as he had brought about, and those who submitted ignorantly might well have hoped that his was but a passing aberration, and that in bowing before the storm no finality was involved.

But Elizabeth had to deal with men already experienced in the ways of heresy and schism, and they could not be mistaken as to her intention. Their example was followed by both universities subscribing unanimously to the articles which they had put forward in Convocation. Elizabeth's council retorted by a

¹ Strype, *Annals*, Introduction, p. 33.

² Wilkin's, *Concilia*, IV., p. 179.

counter declaration that the "Bishop of Rome" had no authority within the realm. The oath of supremacy was then tendered to each bishop in turn, and all refused with the one shameful exception of Kitchin, Bishop of Llandaff, who was accordingly allowed to retain his see, the fifteen other bishops being deprived and ejected. They all suffered imprisonment, except the bishops of Chester and St Asaph, who escaped abroad.

The entire Catholic episcopate was now practically swept away, and as Elizabeth's council, after some indecision, decided that the new settlement was to include bishops, they summoned the aged Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, to consecrate Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, and so lay the foundation of the new hierarchy. Tunstall refused point blank, as did also the four others named in the commission. Ultimately, as by law an archbishop must be consecrated by an archbishop or by four bishops, and there was no archbishop, the council ordered four prelates on their allegiance to consecrate Parker. These were: Barlow, formerly Bishop of Bath and Wells, Hodgkins, suffragan Bishop of Bedford under Henry VIII., Scory and Coverdale, Protestant bishops appointed by Edward VI., and consecrated under the new ordinal. None of these were actually in possession of a see, and none had any jurisdiction. Nevertheless, they proceeded to consecrate Parker at Lambeth according to the ordinal of Edward VI.; and thus the Elizabethan hierarchy was founded. The consecration was invalid, and of no effect in more ways than one. "First and foremost," says Dr Brownlow, Bishop of Clifton,¹ "the rite employed was not the ancient rite which, as the only one handed down to the Church by an immemorial tradition, was the only one which could be treated as in any sense trustworthy. Secondly, this new rite was one constructed by Archbishop Cranmer and his friends, on

¹ *A Short History of the Church in England.*

the essentially Protestant principle of excluding whatever phraseology involved a sacerdotal conception of the priesthood. Thirdly, the episcopal consecration of Barlow was at the best most doubtful; and yet he was the principal at the consecration of Archbishop Parker (from whom all subsequent Anglican orders are derived). Hodgkins, one of the assistant bishops, was indeed a truly consecrated bishop, beyond all doubt; but there is small probability for the notion that an assistant bishop's part in the ceremony has the effect of independently conferring orders." The principal actors in the drama were, however, not concerned with questions of Apostolic succession or validity, legality being their one aim. A plenitude of jurisdiction being considered to reside in the sovereign, Elizabeth's consent was all that was necessary. To the queen and her ministers bishops were no more than officers of State, and her forcible tirade addressed to the Protestant bishop of Ely, when he ventured to remonstrate with her on her spoliation of Church property, is sufficient indication of the contempt with which she regarded the bishops of her own creation.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE BEGINNING OF THE ELIZABETHAN PERSECUTION

THE firm refusal of the Catholic bishops to worship at the shrine which Elizabeth, the queen, had set up resulted, we have seen, in their imprisonment. As there has been considerable misapprehension as to the nature of their treatment and their conduct under it, it will be well if we devote a little space to a brief examination of the historical data concerning this important point. And we shall find that instead of being treated with leniency, and even indulgence, as some have supposed, they were indeed the first of some hundred and sixty martyrs who suffered for the Catholic faith under Elizabeth. Even when committed into the custody of the bishops, who had been intruded into their sees instead of being confined in the public jails, their lot was not more enviable than that of their brethren, and more than one of them protested that the Tower was preferable to Lambeth Palace as a prison, and the lieutenant to Archbishop Parker as a jailor.

The majority of Elizabeth's new bishops, looked upon by the queen herself with contempt, were uneducated, violent iconoclasts, whom Sander designates as "rapacious German wolves." Horne, the new Bishop of Winchester, had been Dean of Durham in Edward's reign, and had displayed his fervour by smashing the windows of the cloister in which the life and labours of St Cuthbert were depicted. He was forced to flee the country on Mary's accession, but had now returned as one of Elizabeth's right-hand men.

"The bishops," says Mr Hubert Hall, of the Public Record Office, in his *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, "were mostly starveling pedants, creatures of a court action, whose fingers itched after filthy lucre; or else good, plodding, domesticated men, with quiverfuls to provide for; graziers or land-jobbers who had missed their vocation. Narrow, harsh, grasping, servile, unjust, they were despised as much by their masters as they were hated by their flocks. . . . Denounced alike by Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans, they existed only by the good-will of the Crown, or rather by its contemptuous toleration. Even well-meaning bigots, like Parker and Whitgift, appear in pleasant relief to theologians of the school of Aylmer and Cox—except for purposes of religious or political partisanship."

The declaration which the Catholic bishops had drawn up in convocation and laid before Parliament was persistently ignored by the government, but Cecil was all the time laying subtle plans for their defeat. He suggested to the queen the holding of a public disputation upon certain crucial points, in order to intimidate those who still clung to the old religion, and break down their opposition to the innovations. The history of the Westminster Conference, as contained in the letters of the Venetian and Spanish ambassadors in Sander's *History of the Schism*, and even in the contemporary writings of the Protestant disputators, shows throughout a fixed determination on the part of those who were responsible to crush out the Catholic argument, and to claim a victory for the Lutherans. When the bishops remonstrated as to the manner in which the proceedings were conducted, they were declared contumacious and disobedient, the regulations being according to the queen's wish and command. The meeting was on this pretext dissolved, and two of the bishops were committed the same evening as close prisoners to the Tower. These were White of Winchester and

Watson, Bishop of Lincoln. White had declared boldly that in his church he would not tolerate "this new mode of officiating, as it was heretical and schismatic." Upon this the lords of the council had replied: "Then is the queen heretical and schismatic?" His prison life was short, for he contracted an ague in his unhealthy cell, and sealed his faith with his death at the beginning of 1560, not having completed his fiftieth year.

The Bishop of Lincoln is described by Sander as surpassing in learning all his colleagues. Less happy than Bishop White, he still languished in the Tower in 1570, and if he was removed for a time into a purer atmosphere, that part of London being then plague-stricken, he was soon imprisoned again more closely, and in a few months we find him in confinement at Wisbeach Castle, where he died in 1584, after more than fourteen years' imprisonment.

To Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, was assigned a form of punishment which seems to have been suggested by a refinement of cruelty on the part of his persecutors. It will be remembered that he had stoutly refused to consecrate Matthew Parker when required to do so by the council. He was now given into Parker's custody at Lambeth, and the council ordered their archbishop "to have a vigilant eye that no man hath access unto him but yourself, and such as you shall appoint." Parker obeyed these behests so well, and kept up such constant and harassing disputations with his prisoner, that the feebleness of Tunstall's eighty-five years was unable to endure the strain, and he died after two months of the intolerable persecution on November 18th, 1559. On October 5th Cecil had written to Parker: "The Queen's Majesty is very sorry that ye can prevail no more with Mr Tunstall, and so am I, I assure you; for the recovery of such a man would have furthered the common affairs of this realm very much."

The much-maligned Edmund Bonner, Bishop of

London, was one of the first to suffer under the new laws. He was deprived of his see in May 1559, having refused to obey the order of the council "to remove the service of the Mass and of the Divine Office" from his metropolitan church of St Paul. He replied to the summons by declaring that "if any other religion than the Catholic shall be introduced into my church, it shall be not only without knowledge on my part, but against my will." He was then required to resign his bishopric "to one Master Grindal," a queen's man, but he answered that he would never do so, and preferred death. The council then proceeded to depose him, and he found a temporary refuge at Westminster; but Abbot Feckenham and his monks being under the like condemnation, the respite was but of a few weeks' duration. Of Bonner's first imprisonment in 1559 the records are silent, but in July 1561 we find him a prisoner in the Marshalsea "for matter of religion." The oath of supremacy was tendered to him by Horne, Protestant Bishop of Winchester, on the 26th April 1564, but he refused it. A second refusal, according to the statute of 1563, involved indictment for high treason and death. But Bonner, who was no less skilled in civil than he was in canon law, baffled the prosecution in their endeavour to confuse issues, and again and again his trial was postponed, his irrefutable plea being that the first time the oath was tendered he was "not convented or called herein before a lawful bishop, the said Mr Robert Horne not being lawful bishop of Winchester, but an usurper, intruder and unlawful possessioner thereof." For three years Bonner was dragged four times a year from his prison in the Marshalsea, and taken to Westminster to receive a fresh reprieve "in manifest and notorious danger of his life many ways, and especially by reason of the naughty and unruly multitude, which the said Dr Horne and his complices purposely of malice had caused then and there in the streets riotously to be

assembled, and by them and their beadle to be thereof advertised.”¹ After ten weary years spent in confinement, Bishop Bonner ended his troubled life, and on September 5th, 1569, he was buried at night in the churchyard of St George’s, Southwark, “among thieves and murderers.” His body was, however, secretly removed by faithful Catholics, and buried under the altar in Copford Church.

Gilbert Bourne, Bishop of Bath and Wells, died five days after the Bishop of London. On his deprivation in June 1560 he was sent to the Tower, but was afterwards removed to the custody of Bullingham, Protestant Bishop of Lincoln. He was, however, back again in the Tower in 1565, and was later on transferred to the safe keeping of Dean Carew at Silvertown in Devonshire, where his death occurred.

Nicholas Heath, Archbishop of York, was deprived in July 1589. He was offered the privilege of living where he pleased, if he would promise to be present at the new services. He declined the offer emphatically, and when asked for his reasons, replied: “As for my reasons for refusing, the council has often enough heard me explain them in Parliament, and they may all be summed up in this—whatever is contrary to the Catholic faith is heresy; whatever is contrary to unity is schism.” The commissioners urged that he would be free not to receive the Anglican Communion, but he answered: “It is all one as far as schism is concerned, to join in it partially or in its entirety; and therefore not only by no word, but also by no act of mine will I approve of any of the things you do. Nor do I want even my back to be seen where, as the heart cannot be read, scandal may be given by it.”

Heath was sent to the Tower on June 10th, 1560, whither Thirlby, Bishop of Ely, had preceded him on the 3rd, while the bishops of Lincoln and Worcester

¹ Strype, *Annals*, vol. I., p. 342.

had arrived on May 20th. To them were added Turberville, Bishop of Exeter, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells on June 18th. Feckenham, Abbot of Westminster, and Boxall, Dean of Peterborough, joined them about the same time. The Bishop of Ely had been also promised liberty if he would attend the new service without the obligation of Communion. As his first answer did not appear to the commissioners altogether decisive, the offer was repeated, whereupon the bishop replied, "Without wanting to dissemble, I cannot come to your prayers." The Bishop of Lincoln answered in a similar manner to the same proposal, as did also Bishop Pate of Worcester, who added, "My resolution is to die in the faith in which I was baptised."

The Bishops of Exeter and Bath pleaded likewise, and died in the Tower, probably of the plague, in 1565; but Poole, Bishop of Peterborough, escaped the necessity of a refusal by his protracted illness. He is supposed to have died in the Fleet prison.

Bishop Bayne of Lichfield was committed on his deposition to the custody of Grindal, Bishop of London, and died the same year.

In this manner the whole Catholic hierarchy was annihilated and supplanted by a Protestant episcopate.¹

¹ The Rev. E. Phillips, *The Extinction of the Ancient Hierarchy*.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE STAMPING OUT OF THE OLD RELIGION

THE splendid example of the Catholic bishops was followed by the great majority of the clergy, and their widespread refusal to take the oath of supremacy caused the new Protestant bishops great difficulty and embarrassment. According to Hallam: "For several years it was the common practice to appoint laymen, usually mechanics, to read the service in the vacant churches," so great was the dearth of available clergy. All persons about to take orders or to receive degrees in either university, all the clergy on promotion to livings, all judges, magistrates and servants of the Crown, were required to swear that the queen was "the only supreme governor of this realm . . . *as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things and causes as temporal; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm.*"

The Book of Common Prayer was again enforced as under Edward. If a priest refused to adopt it, or spoke slightly of it, he was liable to forfeit a year's stipend for the first offence, and to be imprisoned for six months without the option of bail. For the second offence he was deprived of his living altogether, and condemned to a year's imprisonment. For a third offence he suffered life-long imprisonment. A layman convicted of speaking publicly against the Book of Common Prayer, or of causing a priest to use any other prayers than those contained

therein, either in public or private devotions, or of causing him to celebrate any sacrament in a different manner from that prescribed in the Prayer Book, was liable to be fined 100 marks for the first offence, to be paid within six weeks, under pain of six months' imprisonment, without the option of bail. For a second offence the punishment was a fine of 400 marks and a year's imprisonment, with the forfeiture of all his goods.¹

The effect of this cleverly contrived engine had been foreseen, and the way in which it was worked was ingenious. At first some indulgence was exercised; men were to be surprised into acceptance of the new service. Arrests were few and far between, and made chiefly for the sake of intimidation. The great danger to Catholics was their uncertainty as to whether they were bound in conscience to disregard the order to be present at the services of the new State religion. Their case was without a precedent. The Book of Common Prayer contained little to which a Catholic need object. The psalms were the same as those to which they had always been accustomed, and most of the prayers had been drawn from the missal. The Sacrifice of the Mass had indeed been swept away, but the actual condition of things was not considered to be a permanent one; and meanwhile, would it not be better for the ultimate triumph of the cause to bend a little before the storm? Many had Mass secretly said in their own houses, and appeared afterwards at the parish church to avoid suspicion and escape the fines; but they took care to stop their ears with wool, lest they should hear the sermon. Sir Richard Sherborne and his family were indicted for such practices.

But during the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign, the queen and her ministers were more concerned to destroy the ancient worship altogether than to enforce the utmost rigour of the new laws upon the

¹ Statute of the Realm, 5 Eliz. c. 1. Camden, p. 71.

worshippers. War was first declared upon stones and the relics and shrines of saints: and then, if the people still refused to bow before the image that Elizabeth, the queen, had set up, flesh and blood must suffer. This policy played into the hands of the most violent among the heretics; greed and cupidity, sacrilege and fanaticism were rampant. Blasphemies, expressed in the most revolting language, acts of barbarism that would have disgraced South Sea Islanders, emanated from men modestly calling themselves "reformers." Smashing, hacking and defacing were marks of the elect. Much of the ruin wrought on old altars, tombs, church porches, windows, &c. dates from the second and third year of Elizabeth. The headless and otherwise mutilated statues which we see in the abbeys and cathedrals throughout the kingdom, the missals "sold to pedlars to lap spices in," the holy-water fonts turned into milk vessels, are eloquent of the early part of the reign of "Good Queen Bess." Rood-lofts were then converted into weavers' looms and bedsteads, vestments were used for bed-curtains, altar linen was turned into smocks, altar stones were inserted into the pavement at the entrance of churches, so that all who passed in and out might trample them under foot. John, Lord Sheffield, of Mulgrave Castle, of infamous memory, had one altar stone made into a sink for his kitchen; others were used as swine-troughs, or put to similar uses. Pyxes were given to children as playthings, or made into salt-cellars.¹ The feasts of the Blessed Virgin were abolished, and the queen's birthday was ordered to be celebrated instead.

But lest it should be supposed that these were merely the freaks of the uncivilised and ignorant multitude of Puritan fanaticism, or the wild iconoclastic fury of anabaptists, let us turn to some of the public

¹ Edward Peacock, F.S.A. *English Church Furniture: Reformation Period*, pp. 29-171.

records of the time, and we shall see that they were carefully prescribed by the new religious authorities, and were in fact judicial acts of the Elizabethan bishops, in conjunction with the Elizabethan ministers. They were decreed and carried out with the distinct object of removing from the people's sight all that could remind them of their former religion, so that they might be completely weaned from the old form of worship, and should in time learn to hate and revile that which they had from time immemorial cherished and venerated. Effectually as the work had been done in the early part of the reign, some apprehension was felt, as late as the year 1571, that the people yearned after their lost heritage; that the memory of altar and sacrifice was still dear to them; that the saints were not forgotten, nor the holy mother of God and her shrines despised. Therefore, in Archbishop Grindal's "Articles to be inquired of in the Archdiocese of York" for that year, there occurs this paragraph:—

"Whether in your churches and chapels all altars be utterly taken down and clean removed even unto the foundation, and the places where they stood paved, and the wall whereunto they joined whited over and made uniform with the rest, so as no breach or rupture appear. And whether your rood-lofts be taken down and altered, so that the upper parts thereof, with the sollar or loft, be quite taken down unto the cross-beam, and that the said beam have some convenient crest put upon the same."

In the "Injunctions" for the see of Durham, the following entry occurs under *Connscilif*:—

"There remaineth in the church the remnants of the rood-loft untaken down. There remaineth in the choir certain corbel-stones which were sometime foot-paths for images, one on either side of the high altar. The churchwardens to remove and certify."

And in Grindal's "Injunctions" for the same year these words occur:—

"The churchwardens shall see that the altar stones be broken, defaced and put to some common use."

It was no wonder if, seeing the savage hatred with which their religion was trampled under foot, the Catholics trembled, and asked themselves, "What next?" If they still refused to be present at the new service, might not worse be in store? As we have said, the thing was without a precedent, and in 1562 the Spanish ambassador wrote to Rome on behalf of the Catholics in England, praying that the question might be laid before the Pope whether they might without sin take part in the Anglican service. "The case is a new one," he had said, "and not easy to settle." It was laid before the Roman Inquisition in this form: "May Catholics living in a country in which the practice of their religion is forbidden under pain of death, without danger of losing their souls, obey a law which orders them to frequent conventicles where psalms are sung, passages from the Bible read out in the vernacular, and heretical doctrines are preached?"

The answer was a plain and emphatic "No." Although it was admitted that they would not be compelled to communicate with heretics, they would, in appearance at least, share their belief and expose their own faith to danger. This was indeed the very object of the law, in order that they might become Protestants by imperceptible degrees.¹

The penalty for non-attendance on Sunday at the parish church was £20 per lunar month for those possessed of means; the poor were simply thrown into prison. Even when his absence had been compounded for, a recusant was still liable to a year's imprisonment, and an extra fine of 500 marks each time he heard Mass. When released from jail he was in danger of forfeiting his lands and goods for ever for the crime of straying beyond five miles from his own door. Many rich and influential families were reduced to beggary, for the fines were relatively so enormous, that to arrive

¹ Simancas Papers, VII., 24.

at a just appreciation of them according to modern coinage we must multiply every figure by twelve.

The year 1569 was a decisive one. After the repeated efforts of his predecessor to soften Elizabeth's heart, Pope St Pius V. judged that the time had passed when England might be saved to the Church by patience and longanimity. Henceforth the souls of the faithful were in jeopardy, unless the nature and bent of the conspiracy were exposed. A generation was growing up in ignorance of Catholic doctrine, and legislation was indispensable, in order that sincere and honest Catholics might not blindly wander from the fold. On the 24th February 1569 the Pope signed the bull *Regnans in Cælis*, deposing Elizabeth, and releasing her subjects from obedience to her. The oft-repeated, light-hearted assertion that Pius V. deputed an assassin to kill her has no foundation in fact; it is one of those hoary calumnies out of which much capital has been made in the course of three centuries. The bull of deposition was of course the signal, when the fact became known, for an outburst of severity far greater than any that had hitherto been inflicted on the Catholics of England. The ten years of unbloody persecution were at an end, and they were followed by torture, bloodshed, and every ingenuity of barbarism and cruelty to the end of Elizabeth's reign, and far beyond.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE BLOODY PERSECUTION

IN the momentous year 1569 one supreme effort was made by the foremost English Catholics "to restore the Crown, the nobility and the worship of God to their former estate," and to liberate the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots from captivity. More than half the population of the country was still Catholic, and it was estimated that in the counties of York, Durham and Northumberland there were not ten gentlemen who favoured Elizabeth's proceedings in matters of religion.¹ The Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland took Barnard Castle, entered the city of Durham at the head of only sixty armed horsemen, and, in spite of the smallness of their numbers, met with so little resistance that they were able to take possession of the place and cause High Mass to be once more celebrated in Durham Cathedral in the presence of several thousand worshippers. They ransacked the property of the Bishop of Durham and his clergy, but they put no one to death.² From Durham the little band of soldiers marched through Staindrop, Darlington, Richmond and Ripon, restoring the Mass as they went. At Bramham Moor they mustered 1700 horse and somewhat under 4000 foot, and, but for the want of a proper understanding with the Catholic population, would undoubtedly have succeeded in their enterprise. But their money was all spent before the help promised by the King of

¹ Sadler II., 55.

² *Zürich Letters*, Grindal to Bullinger. First series. Letter 87.

Spain could arrive, or the Duke of Alva reach them with his contingent of men or money, and the cause was lost before ever a pitched battle was fought. The Earl of Sussex, who had set up the royal standard, numbered among his army a large body of Catholic gentlemen and their tenantry, who either misunderstood the nature of the rising, or who were impelled by interest to range themselves on the side of the government. Many were still in doubt, not knowing that Elizabeth had been excommunicated. A splendid opportunity for vindicating the cause of religion was wasted and lost by mismanagement and want of capable organisation. The Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland were taken prisoners. Sussex played the part of executioner on the country people who had joined the insurgents, and was merciless in his anxiety to convince the queen of his loyalty. He had been accused of dilatoriness in attacking the rebels; he could not be convicted of backwardness or pity in dealing with the vanquished. Cecil had advised that, in order to discover the guilty, a few of the inhabitants of each implicated town should be apprehended, "and if nede be, should by lac of foode" be induced to disclose the names of those whom they knew to have taken part in the rising.¹ On December 29th, according to Camden, Stow and Holinshed, Sussex wrote to Cecil in regard to those who were to be sacrificed: "The number whereof is yet uncertain, for that I knowe not the number of the towns, but I gesse that it will not be under six or seven hundred at the least that shall be executed of the common sorte, besides the prisoners taken in the felde." Much has been said and written of the cruelties perpetrated under Mary, and it is true that about 200 persons suffered during her reign for spreading abroad heresy, and for conspiring against public order and safety; but after this one attempt of the downtrodden Catholics of the north to regain their liberty to worship

¹ Sharpe, *Memorials of the Rebellion*, 126.

God as their ancestors had done since England was a Christian country, the executions were incomparably more numerous. More than 300 took place in the county of Durham alone, and between Newcastle and Wetherby, a district of sixty miles in length and forty in breadth, there was not a town or village in which some of the inhabitants did not perish on the gibbet as a warning to their fellows. Sussex, as we have seen, estimated these in all at about "six or seven hundred at the least." Those who were pardoned were required to take the oath of supremacy.

After nearly two years spent as a prisoner at Lochleven, the Earl of Northumberland was delivered into the custody of Lord Hunsdon, and the wonderful strength and sweetness of his character so won over his jailor, otherwise no friend to Catholics, that he himself applied to the queen for a pardon. Elizabeth replied by an order to send him forthwith to York to be executed. Hunsdon protested that it was not his office to conduct noblemen to the scaffold, and that he would rather be sent to prison himself than obey the command. The task was ultimately assigned to Sir John Foster, who had been enriched with Northumberland's confiscated estate. It was signified to the condemned man that his life would be spared, and that he should be restored to honour and fortune, if he would abjure his religion. But he replied that no greater honour could be conferred on him than the honour of a martyr's death. Even then Elizabeth's clergy were sent to argue with him, but he did not cease to declare that he would die in the holy Catholic religion. With a serene and joyful countenance he laid his head on the block, August 2nd, 1572.¹ There is no doubt that the Earl of Northumberland was regarded by his contemporaries as a martyr for the faith.²

¹ Bridgewater, *Concertatio Ecclesiæ in Angliā*, fols. 45-49.

² Among the portraits painted by Circignani on the walls of the English College in Rome, and which have so largely

In the meanwhile, the bull of excommunication against Elizabeth had been published. Its immediate result was to render the Queen of Scots' captivity closer and harder, and the execution of her devoted friend the Duke of Norfolk foreshadowed her own. Thenceforth the rack, with its attendant instruments of torture, was seldom at rest. Whole families of Catholics emigrated, and their lands and goods were immediately seized by the Crown.¹ Elizabeth complained that the court of Philip II. was the resort of all her enemies, but at home every jail in the kingdom contained recusants, so that it was sometimes objected that Protestant criminals, their fellow-prisoners, were in danger of being converted. A gentleman, whose name does not transpire, writing to Sir Francis Walsingham, tells him of a visit he has paid to two priests confined in Newgate. He thinks the prisons great nurseries of Popery, and advises that either priests should be banished or placed in solitary confinement. He desires, therefore, the release of his kinsman, a zealous Protestant, who has been committed to jail "for consenting to the stealing of the queen's venison."²

It does not appear whether the prayer was granted, but it would have been no exception to the common rule, for justice was never worse administered. The judicial records of Elizabeth's reign form a long procession of trials with packed juries, and verdicts that were foregone conclusions. A justice of the peace was defined in Parliament as "an animal who for half-a-dozen chickens would dispense with a dozen

contributed to the beatification of the English martyrs, is one representing the decapitation of a nobleman. It bears the inscription, *Quidam vir illustris capite plexus est*. The Rev. John Morris, S.J., considered that this was the portrait of Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland. Nevertheless, as no name was affixed, there remained enough of uncertainty to prevent his being added to the list of *beati* in the papal decree of the 29th Dec. 1886.

¹ Strype, vol. II., app. 102.

² Harl. MS., 286, fol. 60.

laws." And provided that an accused person were not indicted for priesthood, or for the harbouring of priests, for hearing Mass or for being in the possession of Catholic books, vestments or other church furniture, he might with a little management easily secure a pardon.¹ At the same time, it was extremely difficult for a Catholic accused of any offence whatever to obtain common justice. Thus Thomas Wright, priest, arrested on suspicion of being concerned in Essex's plot, complains to Sir Robert Cecil from his prison in the Gatehouse: "I find it written in the forefront of vindictive justice that no man be punished, especially with death, before trial and judgment. Eighteen weeks have passed since, by your commission, I have been closed within four walls and buried alive (for life without the use of it may better be termed a burial or a death than a life) without examination or sentence. Pray give order that my cause may be tried, and if by law I deserve death, rather let me die once than every day a new death. If I cannot obtain so much, let me enjoy that liberty of prison granted to common prisoners, and not lie thus rotting in a corner. . . . If I obtain this through you, I will pray for you; if not, God be my judge."²

Those Catholics who enjoyed comparative freedom were far from leading a peaceful life. At any hour of the day or night they were exposed to the danger of invasion and of destruction of their property. Often in the dead of night their houses would be surrounded with troops, while the sheriff of the district demanded entrance in the queen's name. Then began, among oaths and blasphemies, the tearing down of walls and pulling up of floors, in the brutal search for priests and contraband church furniture. In the north, when a search was made Catholics fled to the Isle of Man or to Scotland. Some hid in caves, some took refuge

¹ This fact may be verified by consulting the State Papers of the reign—Dom Eliz., vols. 249, 250, 260, in the Record Office.

² Dom Eliz., vol. 266, fol. 23, R. O.

in the wild Peak district, where Robert Eyre, a justice of the peace whose brother was a Catholic, gave warning at the approach of danger. Their wants were relieved by the shepherds, so that, as one of Cecil's spies wrote to the lord treasurer, "that country was a sanctuary for wicked men." These "wicked men" were such as Father Boast, a northern priest, who, in his public examination at his arrest, declared that he was sorry there were not twenty priests for every one throughout the country ; but that he loved the queen, and would take her part even though the Pope sent an army against her. If, however, his Holiness proceeded against her as a heretic, he could not err, and Catholics must obey the Church. For this statement he was declared to be "full of treason." When brought to the scaffold, he prayed that his blood might be "in satisfaction for the queen's sins."

In spite of the prisons teeming with priests, in spite of the rack, the "Scavenger's Daughter," and all the hideous paraphernalia devised to create suffering in every conceivable form ; in spite of house-to-house visitation, and finally the gallows and the disembowelling knife, the Catholic religion was so deeply rooted in the country that it was no sooner crushed out in one part than it sprang up with renewed vitality in another. It took long years for the elaborate machinery of Cecil's policy of extermination to stifle its vigorous life ; it took longer to force upon the people a politico-religious system which appealed to no sympathy and corresponded to no need of the human heart. Soames, a Protestant writer, acknowledged in his "*Elizabeth*" that at the end of that queen's reign one-third of the English were still Catholics, a statement which may, considering who made it, be accepted as a great deal short of the actual fact.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE ELIZABETHAN MARTYRS

BISHOP CHALLONER, in his *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, estimates that from the year 1577 to the end of Elizabeth's reign 187 Catholics suffered death for religion. Of these 124 were priests, and the remaining sixty-three laymen and women.¹ Over and above this number were thousands to whom, although it was not given to them to lay down their lives, may still be awarded a share in the glory of those who won a martyr's crown. Subjected to constant humiliations on account of their faith, to an ever-increasing poverty, by reason of the huge sums with which they were forced to purchase permission to absent themselves from their parish churches, their entire estates were not infrequently forfeited to the Crown. In addition to all this, they lived in a state of permanent insecurity, never knowing when they might not be surprised and hurried off to prison.

A notable instance of constancy during many years of this kind of persecution is seen in the famous Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Lieutenant of the Tower of London under Queen Mary, who, in spite of his acknowledged loyalty to Queen Elizabeth, was not only condemned to be a prisoner within five miles of his own house in Norfolk, on account of his fidelity to the old faith, but was subjected to heavy fines, and to the insult of an armed invasion of his house at any moment. His Catholic servants were dismissed by order of the council, and it was commanded "that there be not any other servants admitted to serve Sir Henry

¹ *Missionary Priests*, p. 14. Introd.

Bedingfeld in any place or office about him that shall be suspected to be of that disposition in religion."

We must pass by the great bulk of these confessors of the faith, of whom Sir Henry Bedingfeld is so striking an example, and mention a few of the glorious heroes to whom it was given to illumine with their blood this dark page of Elizabethan history.

As soon as the change of religion had taken place in England, Dr William, afterwards Cardinal, Allen, a learned priest, who was proctor of the University of Oxford in 1556, exerted himself to keep alive the faith of those around him. All eyes were soon fixed upon him, and being in some danger of his life, he fled to Louvain. While there he was attacked by a bad illness, and returned secretly to England to recruit in his native Lancashire air. Here he saw with no small grief that many Catholics still thought it no secession from the Church to avoid fines and imprisonment by being present at the sermons and services of the State religion. He strenuously opposed their action, and again becoming notorious for his zeal, he again had recourse to flight. This time he went to Mechlin, and thence to Douai. In the course of his travels he had encountered a large number of young Englishmen who, unable to pursue their vocation in their own country, were studying for the priesthood in Flanders. Together with several other priests he assembled these youths, and founded a seminary, which he modelled on the directions of the Council of Trent.¹ The English government watched with vexation the growth of this little seminary, which flourished exceedingly from the very outset, and in 1578 Cardinal Allen had the misfortune to see his work at Douai demolished by Elizabeth, who, enraged at her formal excommunication, prevailed on the governor of the Netherlands to suppress the seminary. The Jesuits, however, offered the students the hospitality of their house at Pont-à-Mousson, while the princes of the Guise family

¹ Cardinal Allen, *Apologia*, c. 3.

pressed upon Cardinal Allen a college belonging to them at Rheims. This was accepted, and for ten years the seminary continued to thrive and to send into England devoted priests, who gave their lives and their blood to keep alive the torch of the true faith. On the murder of the Duke of Guise in 1588 the seminarists returned to Douai.

The proto-martyr of Douai College was blessed Cuthbert Maine, a Cornish gentleman who had been educated in the new religion. After graduating at St John's College, Oxford, he took orders in the Established Church. At Oxford he fell in with Edmund Campion, who afterwards suffered in the same cause, and who having gone abroad, corresponded with him, entreating him to abandon the ministry he had undertaken. One of Campion's letters falling by chance into the hands of the Protestant Bishop of London, he at once sent pursuivants to Oxford to apprehend Cuthbert Maine, together with some of his friends who were also suspected. Maine, however, escaped and went to Douai, where he was received into the Church, and became a priest. In 1576 he returned to England to minister to the persecuted Catholics, taking up his abode at the house of a Mr Tregian, who lived near Truro. He passed as Mr Tregian's steward, but spies soon penetrated his disguise, and when the Bishop of Exeter arrived at Truro he was requested by the Sheriff of Cornwall to help in a search at Mr Tregian's house for a priest supposed to be concealed there. Accordingly a party, consisting of the sheriff himself, the bishop's chaplain and several gentlemen with their servants, went to the place. They were refused admittance on the plea that the sheriff had no warrant from the queen; but they effected an entrance by violence, and went straight to the room occupied by the priest, and beat upon the door with such force that it would have been broken in had it not been opened on the inside by Father Maine himself. He was hurried off to the bishop,

with his books, papers and letters, and examined as to his doctrines. The bishop admitted his learning, but sent him to prison at Launceston, where he was chained with gyves on his legs to his bed-posts and left in solitary confinement from June till Michaelmas, when the judges came on circuit.

Being brought before them, he was charged with having and publishing a Papal bull, with maintaining the supremacy of the Pope, denying that of Queen Elizabeth, with having brought an *Agnus Dei* into the country, and with having said Mass. The judge directed the jury to bring the prisoner in guilty of the indictments, urging that where plain proofs were wanting strong presumption ought to suffice, an argument highly illustrative of the manner in which trials were conducted against Catholics in this and the two next succeeding reigns. A verdict was given in accordance with the judge's wishes, and although afterwards a dispute arose as to the validity of the sentence, the council finally agreed that Mr Maine should be executed, "for a terror to the papists." But at the last his life was offered to him if he would renounce his religion, or at least swear upon the Bible that the queen was the Supreme Head of the Church of England. He refused, and was led to execution, being condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered. He was indeed cut down alive from the gallows, but, falling from a great height, his head struck against the scaffold, and he was thus rendered almost insensible to further torture. Mr Tregian, who was convicted of having harboured him, was deprived of his estates and imprisoned for life.¹

If Sir Thomas More appears to us the most attractive and winning of all these heroes of the faith whom Henry VIII. despatched to their eternal reward, Edmund Campion is perhaps the most brilliant and inspiring of the glorious Elizabethan martyrs. When in 1566 the queen, dressed in gala robes and

¹ Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, vol. I., pp. 15-19,

attended by all the pomp she loved. visited Oxford for the first time, Edmund Campion delivered the address of welcome. He was then only twenty-six, but was already proctor and public orator, and by his learning and eloquence shed a lustre upon his college that was reflected over the whole university. Elizabeth was so well pleased with him, so fascinated by the charm of his manner and bearing, that the Earl of Leicester sent for him, and told him that the queen wished him to ask a favour of her. "Do not," said Leicester, "be too modest, for it is not only the queen's command, but my inclination to befriend you. Ask what you like for the present; the queen and I will provide for the future." Sir William Cecil also promised Campion his support, and declared him to be "one of the diamonds of England."

But time, study and the grace of God gave a more serious purpose to his life; his character gained in strength and fibre, and although he had at first been somewhat dazzled by his immense popularity, he recovered, and found courage to fly from the seductive enchantments of a society where his every gesture was admired, and where his friends prided themselves on being called "Campionists." He went to the English college at Douai, applied himself to theology, and full of remorse at having received schismatical deacon's orders, made a vow to give himself to God in religion. He chose the Society of Jesus, and was admitted into it by the general in Rome. After seven years spent in teaching, preaching and other charitable works, he returned to England, the Jesuits having resolved to send missionaries to share the labour and perils of the secular clergy.

With a mere pretence at concealment, Campion preached almost as publicly as if there had been no persecution, and put forth his *Ten Reasons in Favour of the Catholic Religion*, which excited immense attention. The government, uneasy at the interest

which he awakened, caused him to be arrested by treachery at a gentleman's house in the country. He was sent to the Tower with much display and circumstance, being made to ride all the way with a paper fixed to his hat, on which were written in large characters, so that all might read as he passed, the words "*Campion, the seditious Jesuit.*" When he had been in prison a few days a strange thing happened. Elizabeth, who remembered the splendid scene at Oxford fifteen years before, the eloquence of the young orator, his charm of manner, his wonderful voice, desired to see and speak with him once more, and to try what her personal influence could effect. Therefore, from his cramped dungeon, justly called *Little Ease*, he was taken to Lord Leicester's house, and in the presence of several members of the Privy Council he had an interview with the queen. They told him that they found no fault with him save that he was a papist. "And that," he answered enthusiastically, "is my greatest glory."¹ Then the queen offered him life, liberty, riches—even the Archbishopric of Canterbury was for a moment held before his undazzled eyes—if only he would conform to the State religion. When she saw that she had failed, there seemed left to Elizabeth by way of persuasion nothing but the persuasion of torture. A story of conspiracy had been trumped up to meet the occasion; Campion and seven others were accused of designs against the queen's life. After frequent and most cruel rackings, in which their joints were violently wrenched from their sockets, it was found impossible to produce a shadow of evidence against them, but Campion and his fellow-martyrs—Ralph Sherwin, Luke Kirby, Thomas Cottam, Robert Johnson and Edward Rishton, priests from Douai, together with James Bosgrave, a Jesuit, and a layman named Orton—passed from the Tower to their mock trial at Westminster.

¹ Simpson, *Edmund Campion*, pp. 239, *et seq.*

Campion was as eloquent and brilliant in refuting the false and degraded witnesses with whom he was confronted as when he delivered his oration before the queen at Oxford, but none applauded now. Only when he was required to lift his racked and helpless right arm to plead, one of his fellow-prisoners performed the office for him, and kissed the tortured limb reverently.

Judges and jury had been bought to convict the prisoners ; and so well known was this fact, that one of the jurymen afterwards excused himself by saying that if he had not found them guilty he had been no friend of Cæsar's.

On being asked by the Lord Chief Justice what reason he and his companions could advance for not suffering death, Campion, with a beaming countenance, thus welcomed martyrdom :—

“It was not our death,” he replied, “that ever we feared, but we knew that we were not lords of our own lives, and therefore, for want of answer, would not be guilty of our own deaths. The only thing that we have to say now is, that if our religion do make us traitors, we are worthy to be condemned ; but otherwise, we are and have been as true subjects as ever the queen had. In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors, all the ancient priests, bishops and kings, all that was once the glory of England—the Island of Saints, and the most devoted child of the See of Peter. For what have we taught, however you may qualify it with the odious name of treason, that they did not uniformly teach ? To be condemned with these old lights—not of England only, but of the world—by their degenerate descendants is both gladness and joy to us. God lives, posterity will live ; their judgment is not liable to corruption as that of those who are now going to sentence us to death.”

The sentence was not delayed, and presently Westminster Hall rang and echoed with the jubilant

strains of the *Te Deum*, which Campion sang out clearly, and in which all the other martyrs joined.

Brought to execution at Tyburn, Campion said that he could not ask the queen's pardon, as he had never offended her; but he prayed earnestly for her, and for all concerned in his death, and then meekly and sweetly yielded up his soul. His death had so great an effect upon the assembled crowd, that many were moved to tears.¹

Pathetic, tender and awe-inspiring as was the death of every one of the Elizabethan martyrs, we can only point in silence to the now easily-accessible public records, and must here restrain ourselves to one other example only. Robert Southwell, the Jesuit poet and martyr, belonged to an old Norfolk family, and was educated at Douai. Returning to England in 1586, he went to Arundel Castle as chaplain to Lady Arundel, whose husband, the noble Philip Howard, was imprisoned for conscience' sake in the Tower. Here Father Southwell remained hidden for six years, though his place of refuge was well known to Catholics, who contrived under some pretext or other to gain access to him and to receive his ministrations. He was at last betrayed by a woman, who pretended to be a Catholic, was sent to prison, and in the space of a few weeks was tortured ten times. At the Gatehouse he was thrown into so filthy a dungeon that when he was brought forth after a month he was covered with vermin. So inhuman was the treatment he received, that his father presented a petition to the queen, entreating that if his son had done anything for which by law he deserved death he might be executed; if not, as he was a gentleman, he hoped her majesty would be pleased to order that he should be treated as such, and not allowed to rot in that filthy hole. This petition produced the desired effect, and Father Southwell was better lodged, but three years elapsed before he was brought to trial. The

¹ Challoner, vol. I., p. 38. *State Trials*, vol. I., p. 1050.

verdict of guilty having been returned, he was sentenced for his priesthood to be hanged, drawn and quartered. A Protestant nobleman among the spectators of his execution was so deeply moved by what he saw, that he was heard to exclaim, "May my soul be with this man's!"¹

¹ Stow, Challoner, Foley, *Records of the English Province, S.J.*

CHAPTER XXXIX

A PEOPLE AT BAY

IT was scarcely to be expected that a people still so ardently Catholic at heart as the English nation then was should tamely consent to see their religion stamped out without making some attempt to free themselves from the new and iniquitous laws that oppressed them so cruelly. Stung by the humiliation of their position, as well as by the heavy trials it brought upon them—the exorbitant fines for non-attendance at the parish church, which were rapidly reducing to poverty the richest and the noblest in the land, the midnight raids in which their privacy was invaded and their houses were battered about in the search for priests hiding-places, the wholesale imprisonment of their devoted clergy in disgusting and loathsome dungeons, herded together with the lowest criminals—what wonder if Catholic Englishmen with the least spark of manliness or courage rose in arms, as they did in 1569, and sought by one blow to reconquer their freedom! Nevertheless the blow was not well aimed; it failed of its object, and they were thenceforth doomed to far greater severities; the noisome and teeming jails now disgorged their willing victims upon the gallows, and holy men, whose only offence was that they had come out of exile to keep the Catholic faith alive in England, were tortured and butchered, while the enemies of that faith triumphed all along the line. The places in the Tower, the Marshalsea, the Gatehouse and other prisons vacated by the martyred priests, were filled by those who had harboured them, and thanks to the vigilance of Cecil's spies, many homes were made desolate. Topcliffe, the notorious priest-catcher, was ubiquitous, and followed his victims to the rack-chamber and the gallows, watching eagerly

for their slightest word, listening for the faintest sign which might be interpreted into an admission wrung by torture as to the whereabouts of other priests. It was in Topcliffe's house that Father Southwell, the poet-priest, some of whose sufferings were related in the last chapter, was hung from the wall by his hands with a band of iron round each wrist, his legs being bent backwards and his heels bound to his thighs. Topcliffe told Elizabeth that if it were her pleasure to know anything that was in his prisoner's heart, this torment would force him to reveal all. But nothing passed the martyr's lips except the ejaculations: "My God and my all!" "God gave Himself to thee: give thyself to God," though the spy left him no rest till he appeared to be dying, when he would take him down, burn paper under his nose to revive him, and then hang him up again.¹ Another incarnate fiend, Norton, rack-master of the Tower, to whose tender mercies the martyr Father Alexander Briant was confided, boasted that he had made his victim a foot longer than God had made him. One of blessed Edmund Campion's companions, Father Luke Kirby, suffered the torment of the *scavenger's daughter*, a small iron circle into which his whole body was bent, his hands, feet and head being tightly bound together.²

At York, Margaret Clithero, a gentlewoman, was pressed to death for the crime of sheltering priests, sharp stones being placed upon her body, a shutter placed upon the stones, and heavy weights continually piled upon the shutter till the martyr's life was extinct. On the way to this execution she declared cheerfully that this road to heaven was as short as any other. After doing her thus brutally to death, the government sent her husband into exile, and her children, being questioned as to their religion and answering according to the Catholic catechism, were severely whipped. Her eldest daughter, who was

¹ Tierney's *Dodd*, vol. III., p. cxcvii, also p. 118.

² Challoner, vol. I., p. 57.

twelve years old, was thrown into prison, and remained there till the age of eighteen.¹

These few instances will suffice to show the nature of the persecution that had now set in, and the provocation which the people had to throw off the fearful yoke. The martyrs went indeed to their death with ready, loving hearts and radiant faces, but numerous as the martyrs were, they were not the whole Catholic population, and many were the young, impulsive characters writhing under the injustice and cruelty daily committed in the name of religion. It was impossible that the thrill of horror which went through Europe should leave those most nearly concerned indifferent or inert. To many the only hope seemed to lie in the liberation of Mary Queen of Scots, but Babington's insane conspiracy to assassinate Elizabeth and place the royal captive of Fotheringay upon the throne, carefully manipulated by the spies of the government, only brought about a recrudescence of gibbets all over the country, and gave a semblance of equity to the fresh enactments against Catholics. Such was, however, the innate loyalty of the vast majority among them, that when Phillip II. of Spain would have brought the force of his "invincible armada" to bear upon the enemies of their religion, they preferred oppression to invasion, and deliberately chose to defend their sovereign against her foreign foe. It might reasonably have been expected that this magnanimous loyalty would have earned for them better treatment, but they were persecuted as relentlessly as before, and the last years of Elizabeth's life were the bloodiest of her blood-stained reign. Her death was the signal for a revival of hope. Mary Stuart's son would surely have some pity on the followers of the religion to which his mother had died a martyr!² He had promised them toleration before

¹ Challoner, vol. I., p. 109. Chronicle of the English Augustinian Canonesses Regular of the Lateran, &c. Edited by Dom Adam Hamilton, O.S.B.

² Mary Stuart's claim to martyrdom rests on the evidence of

his accession, but he soon bowed before the strong Puritan party in his government, and before the end of the first year of his reign the sufferings of the Catholics were more grievous than ever.

All the penal laws of Elizabeth were confirmed by James. In the space of one year six thousand Catholics were indicted as recusants, and the heads of houses fined £20 a month, with an additional £10 a month for each member of the family, and arrears, for non-attendance at the parish church. If the money were not forthcoming, the king seized two-thirds of the recusant's lands and property. The minimum penalty for sending children to be educated abroad was £100 (equivalent to £1000 of present day money). It was moreover decreed, to prevent disguised priests acting as private tutors, that no one should teach even the elements of grammar without a licence, the penalty being forty shillings a day to be levied on employer and employed. The house-to-house searches and midnight raids went on as before, and were conducted with ever-increasing violence.

It would not have been natural if Catholics had not been indignant at such treatment. No wonder also that, deprived as they were of the supernatural help and the incentives to patience which even the stolen practice of their religion would have afforded, unable to approach the sacraments from year's end to year's end, some should have become reckless and even desperate. The marvel is that the great majority should have endured so meekly a condition of things that appears to us intolerable. A few exasperated and unruly minds, utterly devoid of the spirit of the holy martyrs, became known to Cecil's spies as men who would stick at nothing to rid themselves of the hated yoke. There can be little, if any, doubt that the government nursed and promoted in every way, for

the letter which the Queen of Scots wrote to the French King on the eve of her execution, in which she tells him that her life was offered her on condition of her renouncing her religion.

their own ends, the conspiracy into which these men entered, in order that, by leading them on to commit a horrible and atrocious crime, the whole Catholic body in England might be discredited. Much has been written on the Gunpowder Plot, and it is not our purpose to give here more than the general outline of a conspiracy, the details of which have been fully dealt with by the greatest critical experts of our day.

Robert Catesby, the pseudo-instigator of the plot, probably the tool of the government, prevailed upon twelve others to adopt a plan by which the Parliament House, the king and all the members of Parliament, should be blown up by gunpowder on the day of the assembling of Parliament, November 5th, 1605. One important and very suspicious circumstance, pointing to connivance on the part of the government, was the persistence with which from the first the Jesuits were drawn into the scheme, as though it were essential to implicate them and render them odious. The means taken to effect this were craftily conceived. Catesby, a real or pretended Catholic, revealed the general design of the conspirators to attempt some kind of organised violence against the government in confession to Father Greenway, a member of the Society, who represented to him the wickedness of any such undertaking, but without being able to prevail with him to desist. Greenway, however, obtained leave from his "penitent" to communicate the matter, also in confession, to Father Garnet, his Superior, with the understanding that if the project were carried out they might both make use of their knowledge, but not otherwise. Horrified at the nefarious scheme, of which he had already had some vague suspicion, Father Garnet did all that he could to defeat it, but was prevented by the seal of confession from taking the only effectual means to avert the meditated crime. It was, as we know, discovered in time, but a servant of Catesby's, in the hope of saving his own life after his master's execution, accused the above-named

Jesuits of a part in the conspiracy. It is supposed that this proceeding was suggested to him by Cecil, for he afterwards repented bitterly of his treachery.

A warrant was issued for the apprehension of Fathers Greenway and Garnet, but the former was already beyond the seas. Father Garnet was taken, together with Father Oldcorne, at Henlip, in Worcestershire, and sent to the Tower. Nothing except what is above related could, however, be discovered in the twenty-three interrogations to which Father Garnet was subjected. He admitted suspicions gained otherwise than in confession of some violence to be attempted, but declared that he had always opposed any such course, and had extracted a promise from the conspirators that they would consult the Pope before taking any measures. He told his judges that he had at the same time written to Rome, urging that a strong prohibition should be issued against any rebellious rising, so that it should be made impossible for Catholics to take part in it. But in spite of his innocence, Father Garnet was declared to be a traitor, was hanged, drawn and quartered, his head being afterwards exposed on London Bridge. All London flocked to see it, for it retained after death many of the characteristics of life, the face being still coloured and flexible, and wearing the venerable expression for which it had always been remarkable.¹

Father Oldcorne was indicted for having sheltered Father Garnet. He was racked five times, but although no knowledge of the plot could be brought home to him, he was pronounced guilty by the jury, and was executed at Worcester on April 7th, 1606. His servant suffered death about the same time, for no other reason than because he was supposed necessarily to be a party to the treason of which, it was clear to all unprejudiced minds, his master knew nothing.

¹ Jardine, *State Trials*, vol. II. Challoner vol. II., also Appendix. Foley, *Records of the English Province*.

CHAPTER XL

JAMES I. AND HIS CATHOLIC SUBJECTS—FATHER THOMAS MAXFIELD

THE hopes of the Catholics for better treatment from the son of Mary Stuart had not been without some justification. The new king, called aptly "the wisest fool in Christendom," was neither bloodthirsty nor vindictive, and even after the discovery of the formidable conspiracy that was to have cut him off, together with all the members of his government, he discriminated between the attitude of the bulk of his Catholic subjects and the few desperadoes who had hatched or been drawn into the Gunpowder Plot. But the Puritan fury of his government neither slumbered nor slept, and bitter were the laws passed against Catholics between the years 1607 and 1618.¹ Already in 1604 twenty-one priests and three laymen, prisoners for religion's sake, had been shipped out of the realm, but throughout his whole reign James consented to the execution of nineteen priests only. Moreover, during the negotiations for his son's marriage with a Spanish princess, he released four thousand Catholics from prison, which act of clemency gave such offence to the Puritans that they proclaimed loudly the sin of letting loose so many idolaters to pollute an atmosphere purified by true Gospel doctrines. On the failure of the Spanish match, they compelled the king to enforce the laws against priests and recusants.

The case of Father Thomas Maxfield, who was executed for his priesthood in 1616, shows that under

¹ See 3 Jac. I., ch. 5; also the Journal of both Houses of Parliament, I., p. 315.

the new government the spirit of the martyrs had changed as little as that of their persecutors. He was descended from an ancient Staffordshire family, and was sent abroad to be educated in 1603. He made good studies at the English college at Douai, was ordained priest in 1614, and sent to England the following year. Three months after his arrival he was apprehended at the altar, being engaged in making his thanksgiving after Mass. He was taken before several Protestant bishops, who plied him with the usual questions—Was he a Romish priest? Why did he presume to return to England contrary to the laws of the nation, after having taken orders in the Church of Rome? Was he willing to take the oath of allegiance? &c.

To these questions Father Maxfield replied simply, first, that he was a priest ordained by a Catholic bishop, according to the form appointed in the Roman pontifical by authority derived from the Pope. He next said that as he was lawfully ordained, so was he likewise lawfully sent to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments to his countrymen, and that as the mission of priests lawfully ordained is originally from Christ, Who sent forth His apostles even as His Father had sent Him, he humbly conceived that no human laws could justly render his return into England criminal, for this would be to prefer the ordinances of men to the commands of the Supreme Legislator, Christ Himself.

As to the rest, he would pay obedience in all civil matters to his majesty, but would not take the oath of allegiance as it was then worded. Those answers were, of course, sufficient to convict him, and he was accordingly sent to the Gatehouse, where he remained for about eight months. He then attempted to escape, having heard that there was a dearth of priests on the English mission, and desiring ardently to labour for the conversion of souls. But his design was frustrated at the moment when he had succeeded in

getting outside the prison, and he was dragged back to a far worse captivity than before. A heavy iron collar was fastened round his neck, to which was attached a chain of a hundredweight, and he was thrust into a subterraneous vault ; his feet were made fast in the stocks, so that he could neither stand up nor lie down, nor turn, nor move his body in any direction. To this was added the unspeakable torment of a swarm of vermin generated by the dirt and darkness of the dungeon, and these loathsome creatures spread themselves over his whole body without his being able to use his hands, or defend himself against them in any way. Added to these horrors were the airlessness and stench of the place, in which he was left for more than seventy hours without food and almost without covering. His fellow-prisoners so compassionated his terrible plight that they removed a plank in the flooring of their cell, and contrived a passage into the hole in which the martyr lay, spoke to him, and threw him down an old blanket to cover him. Another priest who was in the prison came to the opening in order to administer spiritual consolation, but found him so full of heavenly peace and joy, that no exhortation to patience or courage was needed. When, however, Father Maxfield was dragged forth from the vault, he was barely alive from want of sleep and food. His feet were so benumbed as to have lost all feeling, and he fainted continually from exhaustion. But as soon as he had partially recovered, his jailors forced him to walk from Westminster to Newgate, where they shut him up with the lowest felons, loaded him with irons, and provided him with no bed but the bare boards. Here his greatest sufferings were inflicted by his fellow-prisoners, whose profane and impious language met his ears all day and night. He succeeded, nevertheless, in converting two of them, at the risk of being again thrust into the noisome den from which he had barely escaped with his life. He was brought to trial

on June 26th, 1616, and having confessed to being a priest, and to exercising his functions in England, no further evidence was necessary. On the following day sentence was passed, but before pronouncing it the judge offered Father Maxfield his life if he would take the oath of allegiance. The martyr replied that his conscience would not permit him to take it in the manner in which it was worded, for it contained some expressions which he conceived were not consistent with truth. Then turning to the bystanders, he desired them to note that he was condemned for no other crime than his priesthood, no other treason being so much as objected against him, and that even for this in their own hearing pardon had been offered him if he would take the oath of allegiance. He therefore protested, upon the word of a dying man, that he acknowledged King James to be his true and lawful sovereign, that he bore him true and faithful allegiance, and was willing to declare the same upon oath, provided it were done without such clauses and assertions as were contrary to truth and the Catholic religion. He went on to point out the iniquity of laws by which men were condemned to death for exercising priestly functions in a nation that had been converted to the Christian faith by priests of the same religion, but he was not allowed to continue, and his speech was interrupted by the judge, who sentenced him to be hanged, cut down alive, disembowelled, beheaded and quartered.

The Spanish ambassador, and all the foreign Catholics then in London, vainly sought to obtain a pardon, or at least a reprieve; but so great was the esteem and veneration in which Father Maxfield was held, that the news of his approaching end stirred up the populace to an extraordinary pitch of excitement. On July 1st, the day of execution, the road from Newgate to Tyburn was lined with spectators; every balcony was occupied, and a sympathetic crowd followed him every step of the way. Arrived at Tyburn,

he found the gallows hung about with wreaths and garlands of flowers, while the ground beneath it was one mass of sweet herbs and mosses. Having climbed into the cart under the gibbet, he turned to the people and thus addressed them :—

“Dear countrymen, whereas my return into England and my remaining here is the cause of my being brought hither to suffer a disgraceful death, I beg leave to assure you, upon the word of a dying man, that my errand into my native country after many years spent abroad was not to encourage treasons and rebellions, or withdraw his majesty’s subjects from their allegiance, or in any kind to intermeddle in State affairs, but only to be serviceable to the souls of my dear countrymen, by endeavouring to remove their errors, and to bring them back to the faith of their ancestors. Know also, good people, that I am not of the number of those of whom God complains by the mouth of His prophet that *they went without His sending*. No, God forbid that I should undertake a business of this consequence without authority of superiors. I came here because I was sent, and I was sent and commissioned to preach to you by the same Apostolic See which formerly sent St Augustine and his companions into this kingdom, to instruct our Saxon ancestors in the faith of Jesus Christ. And surely, as my mission was from the same authority and directed to the same end, namely, the conversion of Englishmen to the Catholic faith, by accusing me of treason for taking orders in the Church of Rome, and remaining in England, you cannot but see that you involve St Augustine in the same guilt of treason, a thing in itself absurd to all intents and purposes.”

Having arrived at this point, Father Maxfield was interrupted by the sheriff ordering the executioner to do his office, upon which the martyr occupied the few moments remaining in prayer, and when he repeated the words, “*Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit,*” the cart was drawn away, and he remained

suspended in the air. When he had hung for a short while the sheriff gave the signal for him to be cut down, but the crowd opposed it vehemently. They had received the martyr's last blessing with bare heads, most of them kneeling; and seeing that they were in no mood for further atrocities, the executioner refrained from carrying out the rest of the barbarous sentence till life was extinct.¹

Father Maxfield's was no exception to the spirit in which all the martyrs for the Catholic faith in England suffered under Elizabeth, James I., and until the beginning of the eighteenth century, but we have dwelt somewhat at length on his case, as it illustrates so perfectly the immensity of the gulf that lay between the religion of this country before and after the Reformation. In 597 the Pope sent priests to England to preach and teach religion to the Anglo-Saxons; in 1616 priests were proscribed and put to torture and death for coming into the country by the same authority to preach and teach the self-same religion.

¹ Challoner, vol. II., pp. 55-61.

For a detailed contemporary account of *The Life and Martyrdom of Mr. Maxfield, Priest*, see Catholic Record Society, *Miscellanea*, III., p. 32.

CHAPTER XLI

CHARLES I. AND THE CHURCH

IT was inevitable that the confusion caused by the extinction of the hierarchy should result in misunderstandings among Catholics concerning many important things. Matters which, in other circumstances, have been decided by local spiritual authority, were perforce left to be settled by private individuals for themselves, and these were of course not always capable of discerning subtleties and pitfalls, or of answering the specious arguments of the enemy. Disputes arose as to the lawfulness of taking the oath of allegiance in its actual form, and many fell into error, there being no one on the spot to represent papal authority. It is true that three arch-priests had been successively appointed, beginning with the year 1598, and covering a period of twenty-five years, but the first one, Father George Blackwell, himself took a wrong course regarding the oath, and was the cause of a number of Catholics taking it also. He was therefore deprived by the Holy See, and another arch-priest appointed in his place.¹

In 1623 a vicar apostolic was appointed over England and Scotland in the person of Dr William Bishop, who died the following year. He was succeeded by Dr Richard Smith, as Bishop of Chalcedon *in partibus infidelium*. Henceforth vicars apostolic continued to preside over English ecclesiastical affairs till the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850.

Although Charles I. was himself not unfavourably inclined towards the Catholic religion, and although

¹ Tierney's *Dodd*, vol. IV., app. No. 24.

he had married a Catholic princess, Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV. of France, the persecution raged almost as violently during the greater part of his reign as it had done under James I. and Elizabeth.

From the beginning, Puritan displeasure vented itself as much on Charles as on the Catholics, the first cause of their anger being his marriage. Perhaps if he had been more loyal to his word, and less vacillating in principle, he might have turned the course of events, and have written success over a page of English history which now bears the stigma of failure written in his blood. But character is destiny, and Charles, by dint of being true to no one, wrought his own ruin, and the ruin of much besides.

The first to suffer death under Charles I. for the cause of religion was the Venerable Edmund Arrowsmith, who belonged to a family of martyrs, his father having suffered imprisonment and exile for the Catholic faith, his great-grandfather having died in prison in the reign of Elizabeth for the same cause. His maternal grandfather had refused to assist at the new service, and his own brother had him carried by force to the parish church, when he was helpless from an attack of gout. Instead, however, of joining in the Protestant prayers, he began to sing the psalms in Latin so loudly that he completely drowned the parson's voice, and he was ordered to be carried home again. Father Arrowsmith was reserved for a nobler confession of faith. After labouring as a secular priest in the English mission for ten or eleven years, he entered the Society of Jesus. He was arrested, and imprisoned for a time under James I., but was released in 1622, and retaken six years later.

Brought before Sir Henry Yelverton, a fierce Puritan, and one of the judges appointed for the northern circuit, he was asked savagely: "Sirrah, are you a priest?" and his reply, guarded though it was, resulted for him in Lancaster jail. He was

loaded with irons, a pair of heavy bolts, known derisively as *The Widow's Mite*, were placed on his legs, and thus he remained for two days with little or no food, watched incessantly by three sheriff's men, so that no one might have access to him. Having endured great brutality at the hands of Judge Yelverton, Father Arrowsmith was sentenced to be hanged till he was half dead, his body was to be opened and his bowels were to be thrown into the fire. His head was to be cut off and set upon a pole, and his quarters were to be exposed on the four corners of Lancaster Castle. When the hurdle on which he was stretched approached the gallows, the martyr's attention was called to a huge fire, over which a cauldron was suspended prepared to receive and parboil his head and limbs.

"Look you, Master Rigby," cried one of the justices, calling him by one of the names he went by, "see what is prepared for your torments and death, unless you are ready to conform to the laws and accept the king's mercy."

"Good sir, tempt me no more," answered Father Arrowsmith; "the mercy which I look for is in heaven through the Death and Passion of my Saviour, Jesus Christ, and I most humbly beseech Him to make me worthy of this death." The sentence was carried out in every detail, the martyr refusing to the last to conform to the State religion.¹

On the day following Father Arrowsmith's glorious vindication of his faith, Richard Herst, a layman, was hanged for refusing the oath, but after this there were no more trials for religion till the year 1640, when there was a fresh outbreak of persecution.

During the lull in the storm against Catholics, Laud, Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, wishing to return as far as might be to Catholic ceremonial, tried to undo the work of Archbishop Grindal and others, who had waged war upon altars and images.

¹ Challoner, vol. II., pp. 68-76 and Foley, vol. II., pp. 24-74.

Laud had the communion tables removed from the middle of the churches into the place formerly occupied by the altar, railed them in, and distinguished them by altar-like adornments. It became customary in his time to designate them by the ancient name of altar, while the officiating minister resumed the name of priest. One of Laud's clergy even went so far in one of his sermons as to say that the Pope was the true Vicar of Christ, successor to St Peter and chief Patriarch; and he proceeded to enlarge on papal jurisdiction, when a tumult arose among the congregation, and afterwards the preacher was censured. Thus the Puritans had some ground for murmuring, and it was not altogether unnatural that they, as well as the Catholics, should imagine that the State Church had set its face Romewards. Such as the above was not doctrine that Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer and Hooper, Grindal, Jewel and other Anglican divines would have tolerated, nor would they have recognised the churches in which such language was held.

Laud's greatest enemy was the Puritan William Prynne. The archbishop's tendencies put Prynne into a state of frenzy, and he declared that the Church of England was now as full of ceremonies as a dog was full of fleas, and that Laud was a middleman, between an absolute Papist and a real Protestant, "who will far sooner hug a Popish priest in his bosom than take a Puritan by the little finger."¹

Meanwhile Catholics thought they saw in Laud's attitude a promise of his return, and that of his party in the Anglican Church, to Catholic unity. The king was well disposed towards the religion of his consort, and the time appeared to have arrived when some fruitful effort might be made on the part of the Holy See to win England back to the ancient faith of Christendom. In 1634 Gregorio Panzani, a priest of the Roman Oratory, came over with a secret mission to report to Cardinal Barberini, nephew of

¹ *Rome's Masterpiece.*

Urban VIII., on the condition of the English Catholics and of the court, and on the prospects regarding an ultimate reunion of the English nation with Rome. He was to pave the way for an openly accredited agent to the queen, was to conciliate ministers, disarm the Puritans, and do what he could for the Catholics. But so far was Laud from contemplating any submission to the Pope, that he was from the first hostile to the whole proceeding, and aimed rather at being a species of independent Pope on his own account. Both he and the Lord Treasurer Juxon refused even to see Panzani.

Panzani's successor, George Conn, a Scotchman and a layman, had passed twenty-four years in Italy. No sooner had he arrived in England than the report was spread that he was a Jesuit in disguise, come to receive the king into the Catholic Church. Charles, in terror of the Puritans, declared that it was a purely malicious invention, but he continued to dally with Conn, and gave him reason to think that he was in earnest. In a letter to Cardinal Barberini, written soon after his arrival, the Roman envoy gave an account of a long conversation which he had had with Charles, in the course of which he remarked to his majesty that the other powers of Christendom were extremely jealous of the relations that had begun to exist between the Apostolic See and Great Britain. "They know," he continued, "that a perfect union between the two must necessarily tend to check their extravagances and restore to Christ His lost patrimony in the west." To this the king replied with some emotion, saying: "May God pardon the first authors of the rupture."

"Sire," answered Conn, "the greater will be your majesty's glory when by your means so great an evil is remedied."

Not long afterwards Charles asked him whether he considered it an easy thing for a man to change his religion.

"I told him," said Conn, "that when a man applied himself without passion or prejudice to find out the truth, God never failed to enlighten him; the which the king took in good part."¹

But the Puritans were rapidly gaining the upper hand. It was found impossible to uphold Conn in his position as papal envoy to the queen, and after less than three years' service he was recalled. In August 1639 Count Carlo Rosetti was sent to lead the forlorn hope of the English Catholics. The Puritans being now almost complete masters of the situation, frightful scenes were enacted in the Anglican churches. Laud was terrified. "The Archbishop of Canterbury," reported Count Rosetti, "persecutes the Catholics more than ever. On the vigil of Pentecost, I am told by a trustworthy person, he threw himself at the king's feet, beseeching him to proceed against the Catholic religion, at least from political interests, if not from conscientious motives." All that he had done to imitate Catholicism he now undid. The order to bow at the Holy Name was revoked, the communion tables were replaced in the middle of the churches, and from being called altars were renamed tables. Altar rails were again abolished, and people communicated after the Calvinist manner, Catholic books were ostentatiously burned in a public square.² But all that Laud now did to stultify his former Catholic leanings availed him nothing. The disturbances continued in the churches, and scarcely a service was held without a quarrel arising as to the manner of conducting it, some fighting for one posture, some for another.

Whatever religious convictions Charles I. may have had, they gave way before the Puritan storm, and he showed himself only too ready to throw overboard all and any who seemed to constitute a danger. Father John Goodman having been indicted for his

¹ Stevenson and Bliss, *Roman Transcripts*. Record Office.

² *Roman Transcripts*. Record Office.

priesthood in 1640 and reprieved, was again threatened with death, a remonstrance having been presented to the king by both Houses of Parliament, urging the prompt execution of the laws "against priests and Jesuits." The priest in question, rather than be "the subject of so great discontent," desired in a noble petition to the king that if this storm had been raised for his sake, he might be cast into the sea, so that others might avoid the tempest. Parliament, somewhat softened by this greatness of mind, permitted Father Goodman to die a lingering death in prison instead of subjecting him to "a more quick despatch at Tyburn."¹

In 1641 Fathers William Ward and Edward Barlow were hanged, drawn and quartered for their priesthood. Seven other priests were also condemned to the same death, but were reprieved, and died in prison as confessors of the faith.

¹ Challoner, vol. II., p. 83.

CHAPTER XLII

THE CHURCH UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE LATER STUARTS

AFTER the arrest and execution of the king, the House of Commons, exercising a tyranny such as Charles had never dreamed of, poured out its fanatical hatred of the Catholic Church, in the assumption of a new, arbitrary and unlimited despotism. It was no longer possible to stigmatise Catholics as conspirators against the Crown. They had abundantly proved their loyalty, and had freely shed their blood for the king's cause. To enumerate but a few instances : Robert Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon, had fallen in the first battle of Newbury ; Marmaduke Langdale, before whom even Fairfax retreated, captured Carlisle for the king ; Lord Arundell of Wardour was besieged in his own castle, which was regarded as a Catholic and royal bulwark, and the Marquis of Worcester only yielded Basing House at the point of the bayonet, after a desperate struggle, to Cromwell himself. Considering the many deeds of valour which Catholics dared for the king, who had so meanly given in to their persecution, it is perhaps not surprising that the Puritans, or Independents, as they were now called, regarded their loyalty in the light of a further crime. They branded them "malignants," and enacted fresh laws for their undoing. If these laws were less sanguinary than those of Elizabeth and James, they were quite as rapacious and tyrannical. The work of demolition, where it was still left incomplete, was carried to a conclusion, and Cromwell's brutal soldiery hewed, hacked and destroyed whatever venerable relic

of Catholic antiquity still remained to testify to the past religion of England.

The Presbyterian service now superseded that of the Book of Common Prayer, and on their refusal to attend it, Catholics were fined to the amount of two-thirds of their property. The third part remaining to them was absorbed by excisemen and tax-gatherers. Nineteen priests were hanged for exercising their sacerdotal functions in the course of five years. Bishop Challoner gives a list of eighteen landed proprietors "whose estates, both real and personal, were sold in pursuance of an Act made by the Parliament, July 16th, 1651, for their pretended delinquency,—for adhering to their king." Among these was Sir Henry Bedingfeld, lineal descendant of the celebrated Lieutenant of the Tower in the reign of Mary, who was mulcted of a great part of his fortune under Elizabeth in fines for non-attendance at his parish church at Oxburgh. The Sir Henry Bedingfeld who was persecuted by the Parliament for his loyalty to King Charles, besides suffering the loss of his estates, passed three years as a prisoner in the Tower, occupying himself chiefly in composing beautiful prayers and meditations on the Passion of our Lord. The letters which he addressed to his wife during this period are full of the loftiest sentiments, and are models of resignation and fervour.

In 1652 two other Acts were passed by which the estates of many more Catholics were confiscated, among them being those of Lord Dunbar, Sir William Vavasour, Sir Edward Ratcliffe, Lord Arundell of Wardour, Lord Morley and Monteagle, and William Lord Powis. The last named held his castle of Powis for the king, and when taken was kept a long time prisoner at Stafford, after which he was transferred to London, and died there in prison.

The cruel laws affected not only people of position and fortune, but the poor were pursued with equal ferocity. The hardly-earned savings of a Catholic

maid-servant, representing the toil of seventeen years, and amounting in all to £20, being discovered by the sequestrators, two-thirds of the sum were requisitioned for the use of the Commonwealth. On her appeal to the commissioners, she was told that there was no redress unless she abjured her religion.¹ Every misfortune with which the nation was assailed was attributed to the Catholics. They were not only made responsible for the Divine vengeance visiting London with the plague, but they were accused of deliberately causing the great fire which devastated the city in 1666. The monument erected on the spot where the flames originally burst forth recorded on its face this abominable accusation as a fact. Long after the days of Alexander Pope it might still be said that "the tall bully lifts its head and lies"; but about the middle of the nineteenth century better counsels prevailed, and the insulting and libellous inscription was erased by the same corporation which invented it.

It might well have been expected that at the Restoration Catholics would have reaped some reward for the prodigality with which they had risked their lives and shed their blood for their rightful sovereign. "There was never no Papist that was not deemed a cavalier," said Lord Castlemain in his famous *Apology*, but although Charles II. owed his escape after the battle of Worcester entirely to the Huddlestons, the Penderells and other Catholics, gentry and peasantry, it was not until many months after his accession that he took any public notice of his Catholic subjects. When it was no longer possible to ignore their grievances, and he was forced "to avow to the world a due sense we have of the greatest part of our Roman Catholic subjects having deserved well of our royal father of blessed memory, and from us, and even from the Protestant religion itself, in adhering to us with their

¹ Bishop Brownlow, *A Short History of the Church in England*, p. 442.

lives and fortunes for the maintenance of our crown," and although he declared that he wished to put no one to death for religion, in the very same speech he warned Catholics not to hope for toleration. Moreover, shortly afterwards a royal proclamation ordered all Jesuits and other priests to quit the kingdom, under pain of suffering all the penalties of the law.¹ A petition laid before the House of Lords by Lord Arundell of Wardour on behalf of his co-religionists seemed at first to have some chance of success, but it was opposed by the Lord Chancellor, Hyde, and an attempt was made to cause a division among Catholics themselves by a suggestion that if relief were granted, that relief should not be extended to the Jesuits. Nothing came of these tactics, however, neither was there any abatement of the hatred and suspicion in which all Catholics were held. On the contrary, hostility was increased by the conversion of the king's brother, the Duke of York. The cry of "No Popery" was raised, and Parliament took it up. Charles, who would willingly have favoured the followers of a religion in which he more than half believed, was called upon to give public proof of his Protestantism by receiving Anglican communion. Driven into a corner, he complied, and even agreed to the passing of the Test Act, by which every individual who refused to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and to receive the Protestant sacrament, was incapable of holding any office, civil, naval or military. To this was added the obligation to sign a denial of transubstantiation. The first to be struck by this new and powerful engine, the Test Act, was the Duke of York himself, Lord High Admiral of England, who had won immortal laurels by his valour on the high seas. Without a moment's hesitation he resigned the command of the fleet, and his example was followed by hundreds of others in the navy, the army and the

¹ Clarendon. *Dodd*, fol. ed., pp. 46, 240. Canon Flanagan, *A History of the Church in England*, vol. II., p. 341.

civil service, one notable instance being that of Clifford, Lord High Treasurer.

The year 1678 was chiefly remarkable for the hatching of Oates' plot. The circumstances were briefly these. Titus Oates, beginning his career under the Commonwealth as a Baptist minister, became at the Restoration a curate and navy chaplain. In everything he failed owing to his infamous character. He pretended to be converted to the Catholic religion, and obtained admittance into the Jesuit colleges at Valladolid and St Omer, from which latter place he was expelled for disgraceful conduct. He then went to London, and began to plot against the Jesuits. At St Omer he had learned that a meeting of members of the Society was to take place in London, and he now came forward and declared to the government that a conspiracy was on foot, compared with which the Gunpowder Plot was insignificant, and that the Jesuits were the authors of it. The fact that his story was implicitly believed, without a shadow of evidence to support it,¹ is a revelation of the state of credulity to which the Parliament and the nation at large had alike sunk. The government caused it to be proclaimed that "a damnable and hellish plot was contrived and carried on by Popish recusants for murdering the king, subverting the government and rooting out the Protestant religion." Wild excitement prevailed everywhere. Eight Jesuits, on the sole and unsupported testimony of Oates, were put to death for participation in the imaginary conspiracy, besides a Catholic lawyer, who was sentenced without being allowed to say a word in his own defence.

About the same time three Franciscan observants and many secular priests were hanged merely as being priests, and the long list of martyrs was only closed in 1681 with the execution of Oliver Plunket, archbishop of Armagh. The preceding year the venerable Viscount Stafford had sealed his faith with his blood,

¹ Echard, vol. III., p. 460.

and ended the line of the lay martyrs. The prisons, however, still continued crowded with Catholics. Lord Petre died in the Tower, and Father Matthew Atkinson, O.S.F., after thirty years' imprisonment for his priesthood, in Hurst Castle in 1729.

Charles II. died in 1685. During his last illness he accepted with alacrity his brother's offer to send for a Catholic priest; his mind had long been made up on the subject of the claims of the Catholic Church, though he had lacked the courage to proclaim his faith. With the utmost secrecy Father Huddleston was introduced into the sick-room, heard the king's confession, received him into the Church, and gave him the last sacraments.¹

A Catholic monarch now once more ascended the throne of England. The times were difficult, and the utmost prudence and tact would scarcely have succeeded in steering the bark of the State into peaceful waters. James II. possessed neither prudence nor tact, and the world was not ripe for his large-hearted policy of toleration for all religious opinions. He was distrusted from the first, and of the various leaders of sects surrounding him none understood his good intentions but the Quaker, William Penn. The hospitality which James accorded to the Huguenots on their banishment from French soil has never been accounted to him for righteousness, and seven Anglican bishops went to prison rather than agree to his declaration, granting liberty of conscience to all denominations. His primary intention in this declaration was undoubtedly to give relief to the Catholics, but religious toleration had not at that time come within the range of practical politics, and James was suspected of aiming at nothing less than the re-establishment of the Catholic faith. Some colour was lent to this suspicion by his going to Mass in state at St James' and Whitehall, and by the religious orders,

¹ J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People*, p. 620; Lingard, vol. XII., p. 353, 4th ed.

including the Jesuits, being allowed to settle in London. Renewed alarm was experienced when Protestant preachers were commanded to desist from controversy in their sermons, and penalties were imposed on those who transgressed in this matter.

The newly appointed vicar apostolic, Dr Leybourne, and the papal Nuncio who had arrived as ambassador to the court, were charged by the Holy See to temper the king's impetuous zeal, and to prevent his forcing the Catholic religion on a nation now completely protestantised and prejudiced against it. When James compelled the Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, to install Dr Gifford, one of the new Catholic bishops, as their president, Bishop Leybourne opposed him vigorously. But the king was too thoroughly infected with his father's mistaken notions concerning the extent of the royal prerogative to heed any councils of prudence and caution. The Jesuit, Father Petre, was made a member of the Privy Council, and his presence there, even if he had been a model of discretion, as to which there is reasonable doubt, would still have roused the passionate antagonism of the Protestant faction in the government. Entirely devoid of insight into character, and surrounded as James was by enemies and false friends, his every step was a pitfall, and the revolution of 1688, which placed William of Orange on the throne, was the climax towards which all the important events of his four years' reign necessarily tended.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE CHURCH AFTER THE FLIGHT OF JAMES II.

THE second revolution was not effected without severe damage to the Catholic cause, and a recrudescence of severities when the new government had settled into place. In the heat of the fray, after James' flight and William's advent, many Catholic churches, chapels and colleges were destroyed by the rabble. Father Petre, who would have fared badly at the hands of the mob, contrived to escape to the continent, but another member of the Society of Jesus, Father Palmer, a very holy and erudite man, seventy-four years of age, was seized and thrown into prison, where he remained for a fortnight in the depth of winter, without a bed on which to stretch his worn and well-nigh frozen body. He was ultimately transferred to Newgate, but sank in little more than a month under the treatment he received.¹

Almost the first concern of William III. after obtaining possession of the throne was the passing of the Toleration Act, by which every variety of religion was countenanced except Catholicism, while new Acts were framed that bid fair to root up the old religion entirely out of the land.² If these new laws were less bloody than those which already disgraced the pages of the statute book, they were more paralysing and destructive to all Catholic life, and were so cunningly devised that they succeeded in

¹ Echard, vol. III., p. 1083. *Memoir of James II.*, vol. II., pp. 79, 80, 256.

² Statute of the Realm, 1 William and Mary, ch. 9, 15, 17, 18.

depriving Catholics of all hope, and in crushing the spirit out of them by a systematic and petty persecution, which, while leaving the laity nominally at large, hampered them in every detail of their existence. To the enthusiasm with which they had formerly laid down their lives now succeeded a fatal apathy and morbid acquiescence in a condition of things from which they saw no possible issue, and it is only in comparatively recent times that the effect on them of this policy has begun to disappear. The following were some of the disabilities under which they now laboured.

They were forbidden to reside within ten miles of Westminster, to possess firearms, or any horse the value of which should exceed £5. The Elizabethan statute which confined them within five miles of their fixed places of abode still remained in full force,¹ while they were now required to take the test oath, and on their refusal were proceeded against as "recusant convicts." As the oath included not only a declaration of the king's supremacy in matters of religion, but also a written denial of transubstantiation, those who took it formally renounced their faith. In the eleventh and twelfth years of the reign of William III. an Act was passed by which all priests and Catholic laymen, convicted of boarding or educating youth, were to suffer perpetual imprisonment, and any informer charging a priest with saying Mass, or exercising any other sacerdotal function, was rewarded with the sum of £100 from the royal treasury.² Heirs to estates of Catholics were required to take the test oath on coming of age, under pain of the estates passing to the nearest Protestant

¹ An instance of this general rule occurs in the annals of the Bedingsfeld family, on the occasion of leave being given to Sir Henry Arundell Bedingsfeld to absent himself from home for a month. The licence from the justices is dated August 10th, 1713.

² Statute of the Realm, 11 William III., ch. 4,—*An Act for the further preventing the growth of Popery.*

relatives.¹ Not only were Catholics made incapable of inheriting but also of purchasing land, and if a younger son became a Protestant, he could claim his father's estates and wrest it from the elder. Even if a man conformed to the State religion, and his wife remained a Catholic, he was prevented from holding any public office, and every married woman convicted of recusancy was liable to be sent to prison until she conformed, unless her husband agreed to pay £10 a month for her to the State or yielded up a third of his property. The mere fact of a priest being found on English soil was sufficient to doom him to lifelong imprisonment.

It is therefore not surprising to find one Catholic family after another disappearing about this time—rather is it marvellous that any should have weathered so pitiless a storm. Those who did weather it owed their escape more to their prudence in “lying low,” and thus diverting attention from themselves, than to any other cause. They knew well that their property and their life were at the mercy of the first ruffian whose enmity or even notice they attracted. They could generally count on the good nature of their Protestant neighbours, but it was on this and on the indulgent mood of the local magnate that they alone depended. Security for them there was none, and they gradually learned to hide their heads, and to invent obscure, vague and inoffensive words to express even to each other the stupendous mysteries of their faith. “Prayers” was an expression sufficiently vague to do duty for the sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrament of Penance and holy Communion. It was not a condition of things interesting enough to lend itself to dramatic treatment by novelist or poet. The kind of heroism these faithful Catholics practised was neither attractive nor imposing. They became dull, and, with a few exceptions, uncouth and out of date, from want of free intercourse with a world which they had no choice but to shun. Incessant intermarriages within a limited

¹ *Ibid.*

circle produced in course of time disastrous results. Many families died out, others went abroad, and those who contrived in spite of the ruinous fines to maintain their position, and even mend their ever-diminishing fortunes by means of prudent matrimonial alliances, were but an insignificant remnant of what had once been Catholic England.

On the flight of King James, the two bishops Leybourne and Gifford were arrested and sent to prison, but were afterwards released. Dr Leybourne, who had been appointed vicar apostolic of all England in the reign of James, was carefully watched, and frequently summoned to appear before the council and to notify his place of abode. On the death of Leybourne, Dr Gifford, who had been bishop of the midland district, continued his ministrations to Catholics in the vicinity of London. These were not discharged without great risk, and he was constantly obliged to change his lodgings to avoid arrest, as often, he himself tells us, as fourteen times in the course of six months. He died at Hammersmith in 1734. Bishop York of the western district wrote to Propaganda in 1747: "We are compelled to fly from house to house and from city to city. I have been for eighteen months a fugitive from my ordinary residence, and as yet have no fixed abode." Arrests were of frequent occurrence, thanks to the ever-ready informer and the large rewards to be gained.

After the rising in favour of the Stuarts in 1715, in which many Catholics were implicated, it was perhaps not unnatural that their evil treatment should be pushed still further, although as a body they were not concerned in the rebellion. In 1722 Walpole proposed a land-tax, which was doubled for every reputed Catholic, in addition to a tax of £100,000 to be levied on the estates of this already impoverished body.¹ This was perhaps the high-water mark of

¹ Statutes of the Realm, 1 Anne, Stat. 2, ch. 1; 7 Anne, ch. 1, &c.; 4 George I., p. 36, &c.

their trials in comparatively modern times, for thenceforth, although they still smarted under their disabilities, a reaction in public opinion set in. Their enemies had gone too far in their outrageous falsehoods, and many now began to suspect that Catholics were not so black as they had been painted. When in 1778 Sir George Savile, last of the Savile baronets, introduced into Parliament a bill for the relief of Catholics, with the object of redressing such of their wrongs as were inflicted by the passing of the Act of the eleventh year of William and Mary, it was carried without opposition. In the course of his speech when introducing this bill, Sir George Savile declared that he "did not meddle with that vast body of the penal code, but selected the Act on which he found most of the prosecutions had been formed, and which gave the greatest scope to the base views of interested relations and of informers for reward. The Act had not, indeed, been regularly put in execution, but sometimes it had, and he understood that several lived under great terror, and some under actual contribution, in consequence of the powers given by it. As an inducement to the repeal of those penalties which were directed with such a violence against Papists, he stated the peaceable and loyal behaviour of that part of the people, under a government which, though not rigorous in enforcing, yet suffered such intolerable penalties and disqualifications to stand against them on the statutes."

The change that had come over the public mind and the spirit of the ruling powers is easily discernible in the above words. When the Act was framed eighty years before not a voice was heard in protest, and there was no question but of "rigour" in enforcing the new laws. Catholics were the same, but whereas formerly there was none so poor to do them reverence, now many people were beginning to be ashamed of the credulity with which they had listened to the fables of Oates and Bedloe, and the motion of Sir

George Savile being ably seconded by Mr Dunning, it was received with universal approbation. The bill was brought in and passed, but although it repealed certain clauses of the Act of William III., such as those which related to the apprehension of priests and schoolmasters, together with their life-long imprisonment, and the clause which disabled Catholics from inheriting lands, the rest of the infamous Act remained in full force. Priests were still liable to a year's imprisonment and to the payment of a heavy fine for daring to say Mass.

Nevertheless the government, amid the danger which threatened from foreign invasion, anxious to conciliate all classes and creeds, caused a form of oath of allegiance to be drawn up, which not being objected to by the vicars apostolic, Catholics were now free to take. By it they not only declared their allegiance to the House of Hanover, but abjured the Stuart cause, and maintained that excommunicated princes could not be deposed by their subjects or any person whatsoever, and that the Pope had no temporal or civil jurisdiction or power, directly or indirectly, within this realm. On their taking this oath they were allowed to profit by the Act of Toleration as far as it went.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY

ALTHOUGH a change had come over the minds of the more educated of those who had formerly acquiesced in the persecution of Catholics, it must not be supposed that bigotry and blind hatred had entirely made way for peace and toleration. On the contrary, the Relief Act and the new oath of allegiance served but to inflame the ungovernable passions of a bigoted populace, at the head of which the president of the "Protestant Association," the notorious Lord George Gordon, and a few other fanatics, placed themselves. They had discovered that Catholics were being somewhat better handled than heretofore, and affected to believe that unless the Act were repealed there would be no safety for Protestants. John Wesley, founder of the Methodists, identified himself with the "Protestant Association," and put forward his "Letter concerning the Principles of Roman Catholics," a recapitulation of the old time-worn calumnies, which are still made to do yeoman's service in the cause of Protestantism as occasion offers, even in our own day. One of these was the assertion that not only past but also future sins are forgiven in confession ; and besides this Wesley declared that Catholics laughed at the binding force of an oath if it were administered by heretics, and concluded that no government "ought to tolerate men of the Roman Catholic persuasion."¹

Just as in the days of Wyclif, what the leader said was repeated by the preachers of the new sect throughout the land, and the mendacious formula,

¹ The letter is to be found in O'Leary's Tracts, p. 197.

"Catholics hold that faith is not to be kept with heretics," was recklessly tossed about prayer-meetings and field preachments, while Foxe's lying legends furnished forth ample scope for painting what Methodists and others were pleased to call Popery in lurid colours. No wonder, therefore, that the minds of unreasoning and ignorant people became excited and inflamed. The press joined issues with the rabble, and frenzied paragraphs in the newspapers accused the king and the Parliament of being in league with the Catholics to overthrow the Protestant religion. Clamouring for the repeal of the Relief Act, the Protestant Association questioned the efficacy of the new oath of allegiance, since no oath was binding on the Catholic conscience. They conveniently ignored the fact that Catholics had allowed themselves to be hanged, drawn and quartered for two centuries rather than swear against their conscience that the temporal sovereign was head of the Church. But then, as now, consistency had little to say in the fabrication of calumnies, and these falsehoods acted like firebrands on the smouldering fanaticism of Protestant prejudice. Lord George Gordon gravely informed the House of Commons that a general massacre of Protestants was contemplated by the Papists. His remarks were met with derision, but nothing daunted, he called upon every Protestant who valued his religion, his liberty and his country, to put in an appearance in St George's Fields. From 60,000 to 100,000 men assembled, wearing blue ribbons and blue cockades, and forcing all whom they met to join in the cry of "No Popery," they marched in detachments and by different routes to Westminster. Here they stormed the Houses of Parliament, presenting to the Commons a petition to be allowed to bring in a bill "for the repeal of the Act lately passed in favour of the Papists." This petition was rejected,¹ and the pious supplicants first proceeded to wreak their vengeance upon Catholic

¹ *Journal of the House of Commons*, pp. 901, *et seq*

chapels and the property of Catholics generally, passing on to plunder and burn that of Protestants who were known to favour them. For nearly a week London was practically in the hands of a drunken mob. Members of Parliament were insulted with impunity, and public buildings were plundered and set on fire. At last the Riot Act was read, and the military were let loose upon the rabble. But when compelled to disperse in one quarter they reassembled in another, and it was not until six different conflagrations threatened London with destruction, and from 600 to 700 infuriated wretches had been killed, that the party of order obtained complete possession of the field.

It was long before these events ceased to produce a terrifying impression on the minds of Catholics. Now, however, they could at least look to the government for protection, and even compensation for the losses they had sustained in their property. At last they were friends with Cæsar, and the improvement in their temporal affairs was not wholly beneficial to them in a religious sense. Numerically they had never been at so low an ebb, and it was thought that they were dying out, except in the London district, which consisted of nine counties. But in the year of the Gordon riots there were only fifty-eight priests for the whole of this district, a proportion less surprisingly meagre if we consider that there were in 1780 no more than 60,000 Catholics in the whole kingdom, and this at a time when the population of England and Wales amounted to about 6,000,000, so that they formed little more than one per cent. of the nation. According to the Rev. Joseph Berington, whose statistics are the only available ones on this point, a general shrinkage had been going on among them throughout the eighteenth century, and was still in operation. But worse was to come, for of this small body many were relaxed in fervour from worldliness and other causes, while not a few apostatised in order

to curry favour with the civil power. Several well-known priests fell, and the Jansenism that had long floated about the Continent now began to infect the Catholics of England.

In 1783 five laymen formed themselves into "a committee appointed to manage the public affairs of the Catholics in this kingdom." The chief measure contemplated was a petition for procuring the nomination of bishops in ordinary in the place of vicars apostolic—in itself a perfectly legitimate proceeding, tantamount to a petition for the restoration of the hierarchy; but the motive underlying it was un-Catholic and ill-informed, and the whole movement was accurately described by Bishop Milner as "that system of lay interference and domination in ecclesiastical affairs of the English Catholics which . . . has perpetuated disorder, divisions and irreligion among too many of them for near the last forty years."¹

In a printed circular the committee urged that ecclesiastical government by vicars apostolic was contrary to the primitive practice of the Church, "the allusion to the primitive, in opposition to present discipline, being," says Canon Flanagan, "the usual badge of schism."² Such an assertion virtually denies that the Church of Christ on earth is always the living body of the faithful under their living head, the successor of St Peter. It is related that a nobleman, one of the five members of the committee, took up so prominent a position in this respect that the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., used to say: "My father is head of the Protestant Church, and Lord — is the head of the Catholic Church."

Having elected itself for five years, the committee was succeeded in 1787 by another, consisting of ten members, to whom were subsequently added three ecclesiastics. Their first act was to present a petition

¹ *Supplementary Memoirs of English Catholics*, p. 47.

² *History of the Church in England*, vol. II., p. 389.

to Mr Pitt, setting forth the grievances under which the Catholic body laboured, and craving his support in their proposed application for redress. The reply being favourable, they prepared a bill for the repeal of the laws against Catholics, accompanied by a declaration of Catholic principles known as the *Protestation*, and trenchantly described as being "drawn up in ungrammatical language, with inconclusive reasoning and erroneous theology." The vicars apostolic when asked to sign it did so reluctantly, with provisos that it should be understood *in a Catholic sense*. In spite of assurances given to the contrary, the committee proceeded to frame a new oath, in which they styled themselves *Protesting Catholic Dissenters*. This oath the four vicars apostolic formally condemned, declaring it to be unlawful, "and thus," says Dr Milner, "through the mercy of God and the vigilance and firmness of these truly apostolic prelates, were schism and heresy detected and repressed among English Catholics at their first appearance." The bill passed in June 1791 without a dissentient voice, but the new form of oath was utterly discarded, and that of 1778 substituted. By this Relief Bill the legal profession was thrown open to Catholics, and several other advantages were gained.¹ The committee continued its opposition to authority for some few months longer, when, its five years' term of existence expiring, it formed itself, together with thirteen of its partisans, into a body that styled itself "the Cisalpine Club." The Club was a spectacle of disedification to orthodox Catholics for nearly thirty years. Afterwards it ceased to be either harmful or important, and was finally dissolved.

It must not, however, be supposed that in the midst of so much that pointed to deterioration in the character of the Catholics of England there were no bright lights to illumine the pages of Church history at the period at which we have arrived. Not

¹ Statutes of the Realm, 31 George III.

only were the vicars apostolic faithful guardians of true Catholic tradition, but the English Catholics were extremely edified by the lives and principles of the French emigrant clergy, who, during the horrors of the great French Revolution, found so hospitable a reception on our shores. Immense, too, was the advantage which we gained from the presence in our midst of the congregations of refugee nuns, who brought a fresh impetus of fervour to bear upon the somewhat stagnant conditions of Catholic life in England.

In 1781 died the venerable Bishop Challoner in his ninetieth year. He was a convert to the Catholic faith, and went to Douai in 1704 to study for the priesthood. By his literary labours, pursued with a most careful regard for truth and accuracy, he won a world-wide reputation. It has been observed that while Camden founded his account of Catholic affairs in England on distorted narratives, Challoner, exact to scrupulosity, presented in his *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* a striking proof of his accuracy, research and moderation. He spent twenty-six years at Douai before beginning his labours on the English mission, which he then served with absolute devotion and self-abnegation. In 1737 he wrote *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, in reply to Dr Conyers Middleton's *Conformity between Popery and Paganism*. Middleton was so angry that he tried to get his opponent arrested on the pretence that he was disaffected to the government. Challoner therefore went abroad, and was in the following year elected president of Douai; but Dr Petre, vicar apostolic of the London district, claimed him as his coadjutor. He was therefore consecrated bishop and sent back to England. He relaxed none of his austerities on his promotion to the episcopate, but rose every day at six o'clock, prayed while he was dressing, made an hour's meditation, and said Mass at eight. His sermons, unadorned but clear, nervous and instructive, were delivered in strange places, on

account of the precautions necessary to avoid arrests. Bishop Milner, in preaching his funeral sermon, said that "the catacombs where the ancient Christians held their assemblies in times of persecution were elegant and commodious compared with them." They were, in fact, mostly held in a cock-pit, while the meetings of his clergy would take place in some obscure ale-house, where each one would sit with a pot of beer before him to conceal the real nature and purpose of the gathering.¹ Bishop Alban Butler, Challoner's friend and colleague at Douai, was the learned author of *The Lives of the Saints*, a standard work of erudition and piety.

Dr John Milner was a pillar of the Church in England during those critical years of the eighteenth century, when, having to some extent made friends with the temporal powers, it was doubtful whether the Catholics of England would prove themselves worthy of their glorious past, and remain true to the cause for which so many blessed martyrs had shed their blood. As vicar apostolic of the Midland district, Bishop Milner trained up a body of exemplary clergy, successfully eradicated the detestable heresy of Blanchardism—a schism instigated by a French priest—and laboured to bring about Catholic emancipation, a boon not granted till three years after his decease, but which we owe mainly to his efforts. The great Irish patriot, Daniel O'Connell, whose name is also inseparable from the cause of Catholic emancipation, was elected member for Clare, and was the first Catholic to enter the House of Commons under the new dispensation.

Accused of too great rigidity by some, Milner nevertheless promoted in numberless ways the spiritual welfare of his flock. He built the first attempt at a Gothic church in England since the Reformation, which robbed us of the magnificent cathedrals and parish churches built by our Catholic forefathers.

Among his literary works Milner's famous *End of Controversy* will probably be the longest remembered.

¹ F. C. Husenbeth, D.D., V.G., *Life of Bishop Milner*, p. 13.

It has done a great work in its day, and remains a monument of clear reasoning and unanswerable arguments, together with a simple exposition of the principal doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church.

In 1829 the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel introduced a bill into Parliament which forced the government to remove almost every remaining Catholic disability. The oaths of supremacy and abjuration were abolished, and all but a few of the highest offices of the State were henceforth open to Catholics, although it was not until 1831 that an Act was passed relieving them of the double land-tax.

APPENDIX

CRANMER'S "DECLARATION" AGAINST THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS¹

"As the devil, Christ's ancient adversary, is a liar and the father of lies, even so hath he stirred up his servants and members to persecute Christ and His true word and religion, which he ceaseth not to do most earnestly at this present. For whereas the most noble Prince of famous memory, King Henry VIII., seeing the great abuses of the Latin masses, reformed something herein in his time; and also our late sovereign King Edward VI. took the same whole away, for the manifold errors and abuses thereof, and restored in the place thereof Christ's Holy Supper, according to Christ's own institution, and as the apostles in the primitive church used the same in the beginning, the devil goeth about by lying to overthrow the Lord's holy Supper, and to restore the Latin satisfactory masses, a thing of his own invention and device. And to bring the same more easily to pass, some have abused the name of me, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, bruiting abroad that I have set up the Mass at Canterbury, and that I offered to say Mass before the Queen's Highness and at Paul's Church, and I wot not where. I have been well exercised these twenty years to suffer and bear evil reports and lies, and have not much grieved thereat, and have borne all things quietly. Yet when untrue reports and lies turn to the hindrance of God's truth, they be in nowise to be tolerated and suffered. Wherefore, these be to signify to the world that it was not I that did set up the Mass at Canterbury;

¹ Harleian MS., 422; British Museum. Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, vol. i. p. 437.

but it was a false, flattering, lying and dissembling monk which caused the Mass to be set up there, without my advice or counsel. And as for offering myself to say Mass before the Queen's Highness, or in any other place, I never did, as Her Grace knoweth well. But if Her Grace will give me leave, I shall be ready to prove against all that will say the contrary, that the Communion Book, set forth by the most innocent and godly Prince, King Edward VI., in his high court of Parliament, is conformable to the order which our Saviour Christ did both observe and command to be observed, and which His Apostles and primitive church used many years. Whereas the Mass in many things not only hath no foundation of Christ, His Apostles, nor the primitive church, but also is manifest contrary to the same, and contains many horrible blasphemies in it. And although many, either unlearned or maliciously, do report that Mr Peter Martyr is unlearned, yet if the Queen's Highness will grant thereunto, I, with the said Mr Peter Martyr and other four or five which I shall choose, will by God's grace take upon us to defend that not only our common prayers of the churches, ministration of sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies, but also that all the doctrine and religion by our said sovereign lord King Edward VI. is more pure and according to God's Word than any that hath been used in England these thousand years; so that God's Word may be the judge, and that the reason and proofs may be set out in writing to the intent as well that all the world may examine and judge them as that no man shall start back from their writing; and what faith hath been in the church these fifteen hundred years we will join them in this point, that the same doctrine is to be followed which was in the church fifteen hundred years past. And we shall prove that the order of the church set out at this present in this Church of England by Act of Parliament is the same as was used in the church

fifteen hundred years past, and so shall they never be able to prove theirs."

The value of this document consists in the proof it affords of the radical change which was made in the religion of this country at the Reformation, and of the complete repudiation of the Mass by Edward VI., Cranmer, and the other compilers of the Book of Common Prayer.

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